

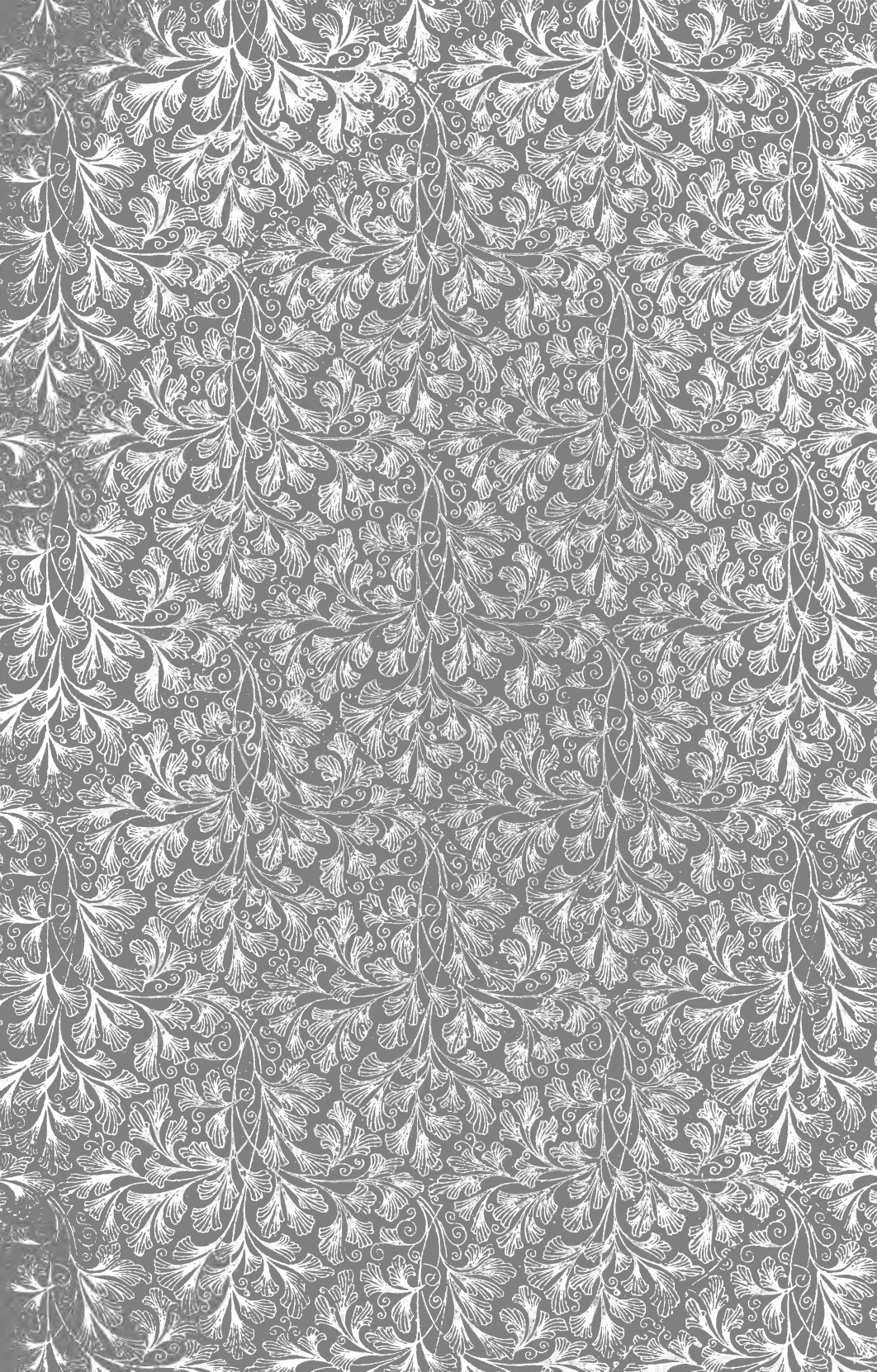


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# P O E M S.

BY

OSCAR WILDE.  
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## HELAS!

*To drift with every passion till my soul  
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,  
Is it for this that I have given away  
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control? —  
Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll  
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday  
With idle songs for pipe and virelay  
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.  
Surely there was a time I might have trod  
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance  
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:  
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod  
I did but touch the honey of romance —  
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?*



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ELEUTHERIA.





## ELEUTHERIA.

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### SONNET TO LIBERTY.

NOT that I love thy children, whose dull eyes  
See nothing save their own unlovely woe,  
Whose minds know nothing, nothing care to know, —  
But that the roar of thy Democracies,  
Thy reigns of Terror, thy great Anarchies,  
Mirror my wildest passions like the sea, —  
And give my rage a brother—— ! Liberty !  
For this sake only do thy dissonant cries  
Delight my discreet soul, else might all kings  
By bloody knout or treacherous cannonades  
Rob nations of their rights inviolate  
And I remain unmoved — and yet, and yet,  
These Christs that die upon the barricades,  
God knows it I am with them, in some things.

## AVE IMPERATRIX.

SET in this stormy Northern sea,  
Queen of these restless fields of tide,  
England ! what shall men say of thee,  
Before whose feet the worlds divide ?

The earth, a brittle globe of glass,  
Lies in the hollow of thy hand,  
And through its heart of crystal pass,  
Like shadows through a twilight land,

The spears of crimson-suited war,  
The long white-crested waves of fight,  
And all the deadly fires which are  
The torches of the lords of Night.

The yellow leopards, strained and lean,  
The treacherous Russian knows so well,  
With gaping blackened jaws are seen  
Leap through the hail of screaming shell.

The strong sea-lion of England's wars  
Hath left his sapphire cave of sea,  
To battle with the storm that mars  
The star of England's chivalry.

The brazen-throated clarion blows  
Across the Pathan's reedy fen,  
And the high steeps of Indian snows  
Shake to the tread of armèd men.

And many an Afghan chief, who lies  
Beneath his cool pomegranate-trees,  
Clutches his sword in fierce surmise  
When on the mountain-side he sees

The fleet-foot Marri scout, who comes  
To tell how he hath heard afar  
The measured roll of English drums  
Beat at the gates of Kandahar.

For southern wind and east wind meet  
Where, girt and crowned by sword and fire,  
England with bare and bloody feet  
Climbs the steep road of wide empire.

O lonely Himalayan height,  
Grey pillar of the Indian sky,  
Where saw'st thou last in clanging fight  
Our wingèd dogs of Victory?

The almond groves of Samarcand,  
Bokhara, where red lilies blow,  
And Oxus, by whose yellow sand  
The grave white-turbaned merchants go :

And on from thence to Ispahan,  
The gilded garden of the sun,  
Whence the long dusty caravan  
Brings cedar and vermilion ;

And that dread city of Cabool  
Set at the mountain's scarpèd feet,  
Whose marble tanks are ever full  
With water for the noonday heat :

Where through the narrow straight Bazaar  
A little maid Circassian  
Is led, a present from the Czar  
Unto some old and bearded khan, —

Here have our wild war-eagles flown,  
And flapped wide wings in fiery fight ;  
But the sad dove, that sits alone  
In England — she hath no delight.

In vain the laughing girl will lean  
To greet her love with love-lit eyes :  
Down in some treacherous black ravine,  
Clutching his flag, the dead boy lies.

And many a moon and sun will see  
The lingering wistful children wait  
To climb upon their father's knee ;  
And in each house made desolate

Pale women who have lost their lord  
Will kiss the relics of the slain —  
Some tarnished epaulette — some sword —  
Poor toys to soothe such anguished pain.

For not in quiet English fields  
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,  
Where we might deck their broken shields  
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,  
And many in the Afghan land,  
And many where the Ganges falls  
Through seven mouths of shifting sand.

And some in Russian waters lie,  
And others in the seas which are  
The portals to the East, or by  
The wind-swept heights of Trafalgar.

O wandering graves ! O restless sleep !  
O silence of the sunless day !  
O still ravine ! O stormy deep !  
Give up your prey ! Give up your prey !

And thou whose wounds are never healed,  
Whose weary race is never won,  
O Cromwell's England ! must thou yield  
For every inch of ground a son ?

Go ! crown with thorns thy gold-crowned head,  
Change thy glad song to song of pain ;  
Wind and wild wave have got thy dead,  
And will not yield them back again.

Wave and wild wind and foreign shore  
Possess the flower of English land —  
Lips that thy lips shall kiss no more,  
Hands that shall never clasp thy hand.

What profit now that we have bound  
The whole round world with nets of gold,  
If hidden in our heart is found  
The care that groweth never old?

What profit that our galleys ride,  
Pine-forest-like, on every main?  
Ruin and wreck are at our side,  
Grim warders of the House of pain.

Where are the brave, the strong, the fleet?  
Where is our English chivalry?  
Wild grasses are their burial-sheet,  
And sobbing waves their threnody.

O loved ones lying far away,  
What word of love can dead lips send!  
O wasted dust! O senseless clay!  
Is this the end! is this the end!

Peace, peace ! we wrong the noble dead  
To vex their solemn slumber so ;  
Though childless, and with thorn-crowned head,  
Up the steep road must England go,

Yet when this fiery web is spun,  
Her watchmen shall descry from far  
The young Republic like a sun  
Rise from these crimson seas of war.



## TO MILTON.

MILTON ! I think thy spirit hath passed away  
From these white cliffs, and high-embattled towers ;  
This gorgeous fiery-coloured world of ours  
Seems fallen into ashes dull and grey,  
And the age changed unto a mimic play  
Wherein we waste our else too-crowded hours :  
For all our pomp and pageantry and powers  
We are but fit to delve the common clay,  
Seeing this little isle on which we stand,  
This England, this sea-lion of the sea,  
By ignorant demagogues is held in fee,  
Who love her not : Dear God ! is this the land  
Which bare a triple empire in her hand  
When Cromwell spake the word Democracy !

## LOUIS NAPOLEON.

EAGLE of Austerlitz ! where were thy wings  
    When far away upon a barbarous strand,  
    In fight unequal, by an obscure hand,  
Fell the last scion of thy brood of Kings !

Poor boy ! thou wilt not flaunt thy cloak of red,  
    Nor ride in state through Paris in the van  
    Of thy returning legions, but instead  
Thy mother France, free and republican,

Shall on thy dead and crownless forehead place  
    The better laurels of a soldier's crown,  
    That not dishonoured should thy soul go down  
To tell the mighty Sire of thy race

That France hath kissed the mouth of Liberty,  
    And found it sweeter than his honied bees,  
    And that the giant wave Democracy  
Breaks on the shores where Kings lay crouched at ease.

## SONNET.

ON THE MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN  
BULGARIA.

CHRIST, dost thou live indeed? or are thy bones  
Still straightened in their rock-hewn sepulchre?  
And was thy Rising only dreamed by Her  
Whose love of thee for all her sin atones?  
For here the air is horrid with men's groans,  
The priests who call upon thy name are slain,  
Dost thou not hear the bitter wail of pain,  
From those whose children lie upon the stones?  
Come down, O Son of God! incestuous gloom  
Curtains the land, and through the starless night  
Over thy Cross the Crescent moon I see!  
If thou in very truth didst burst the tomb  
Come down, O Son of Man! and show thy might,  
Lest Mahomet be crowned instead of Thee!

## QUANTUM MUTATA.

THERE was a time in Europe long ago  
When no man died for freedom anywhere,  
But England's lion leaping from its lair  
Laid hands on the oppressor ! it was so  
While England could a great Republic show.  
Witness the men of Piedmont, chiefest care  
Of Cromwell, when with impotent despair  
The Pontiff in his painted portico  
Trembled before our stern ambassadors.  
How comes it then that from such high estate  
We have thus fallen, save that Luxury  
With barren merchandise piles up the gate  
Where nobler thoughts and deeds should enter by :  
Else might we still be Milton's heritors.

## LIBERTATIS SACRA FAMES.

ALBEIT nurtured in democracy,  
And liking best that state republican  
Where every man is Kinglike and no man  
Is crowned above his fellows, yet I see,  
Spite of this modern fret for Liberty,  
Better the rule of One, whom all obey,  
Than to let clamorous demagogues betray  
Our freedom with the kiss of anarchy.  
Wherefore I love them not whose hands profane  
Plant the red flag upon the piled-up street  
For no right cause, beneath whose ignorant reign  
Arts, Culture, Reverence, Honour, all things fade,  
Save Treason and the dagger of her trade,  
And Murder with his silent bloody feet.

## THEORETIKOS.

THIS mighty empire hath but feet of clay :  
Of all its ancient chivalry and might  
Our little island is forsaken quite :  
Some enemy hath stolen its crown of bay,  
And from its hills that voice hath passed away  
Which spake of Freedom : O come out of it,  
Come out of it, my Soul, thou art not fit  
For this vile traffic-house, where day by day  
Wisdom and reverence are sold at mart,  
And the rude people rage with ignorant cries  
Against an heritage of centuries.  
It mars my calm : wherefore in dreams of Art  
And loftiest culture I would stand apart,  
Neither for God, nor for his enemies.

THE GARDEN OF EROS.





It is full summer now, the heart of June,  
Not yet the sun-burnt reapers are a-stir  
Upon the upland meadow where too soon  
Rich autumn time, the season's usurer,  
Will lend his hoarded gold to all the trees,  
And see his treasure scattered by the wild and spendthrift  
breeze.

Too soon indeed ! yet here the daffodil,  
That love-child of the Spring, has lingered on  
To vex the rose with jealousy, and still  
The harebell spreads her azure pavilion,  
And like a strayed and wandering reveller  
Abandoned of its brothers, whom long since June's mes-  
senger

The missel-thrush has frighted from the glade,  
One pale narcissus loiters fearfully  
Close to a shadowy nook, where half afraid  
Of their own loveliness some violets lie  
That will not look the gold sun in the face  
For fear of too much splendour, — ah ! methinks it is a  
place

Which should be trodden by Persephone  
When wearied of the flowerless fields of Dis !  
Or danced on by the lads of Arcady !  
The hidden secret of eternal bliss  
Known to the Grecian here a man might find,  
Ah ! you and I may find it now if Love and Sleep be  
kind.

There are the flowers which mourning Herakles  
Strewed on the tomb of Hylas, columbine,  
Its white doves all a-flutter where the breeze  
Kissed them too harshly, the small celandine,  
That yellow-kirtled chorister of eve,  
And lilac lady's-smock, — but let them bloom alone, and  
leave

Yon spired holly-hock red-crocketed

To sway its silent chimes, else must the bee,  
Its little bellringer, go seek instead

Some other pleasaunce ; the anemone  
That weeps at daybreak, like a silly girl  
Before her love, and hardly lets the butterflies unfurl

Their painted wings beside it, — bid it pine

In pale virginity ; the winter snow  
Will suit it better than those lips of thine  
Whose fires would but scorch it, rather go  
And pluck that amorous flower which blooms alone,  
Fed by the pander wind with dust of kisses not its own.

The trumpet-mouths of red convolvulus

So dear to maidens, creamy meadow-sweet  
Whiter than Juno's throat and odorous  
As all Arabia, hyacinths the feet  
Of Huntress Dian would be loth to mar  
For any dappled fawn, — pluck these, and those fond  
flowers which are

Fairer than what Queen Venus trod upon  
Beneath the pines of Ida, eucharis,  
That morning star which does not dread the sun,  
And budding marjoram which but to kiss  
Would sweeten Cytheræ's lips and make  
Adonis jealous, — these for thy head, — and for thy girdle  
take

Yon curving spray of purple clematis  
Whose gorgeous dye outflames the Tyrian King,  
And fox-gloves with their nodding chalices,  
But that one narciss which the startled Spring  
Let from her kirtle fall when first she heard  
In her own woods the wild tempestuous song of summer's  
bird,

Ah ! leave it for a subtle memory  
Of those sweet tremulous days of rain and sun,  
When April laughed between her tears to see  
The early primrose with shy footsteps run  
From the gnarled oak-tree roots till all the wold,  
Spite of its brown and trampled leaves, grew bright with  
shimmering gold.

Nay, pluck it too, it is not half so sweet  
As thou thyself, my soul's idolatry !  
And when thou art a-wearied at thy feet  
Shall oxlips weave their brightest tapestry,  
For thee the woodbine shall forget its pride  
And vail its tangled whorls, and thou shalt walk on daisies  
    ped.

And I will cut a reed by yonder spring  
And make the wood-gods jealous, and old Pan  
Wonder what young intruder dares to sing  
In these still haunts, where never foot of man  
Should tread at evening, lest he chance to spy  
The marble limbs of Artemis and all her company.

And I will tell thee why the jacinth wears  
Such dread embroidery of dolorous moan,  
And why the hapless nightingale forbears  
To sing her song at noon, but weeps alone  
When the fleet swallow sleeps, and rich men feast,  
And why the laurel trembles when she sees the lightening  
    east.

And I will sing how sad Proserpina

Unto a grave and gloomy Lord was wed,

And lure the silver-breasted Helena

Back from the lotus meadows of the dead,

So shalt thou see that awful loveliness

For which two mighty Hosts met fearfully in war's  
abyss !

And then I'll pipe to thee that Grecian tale

How Cynthia loves the lad Endymion,

And hidden in a grey and misty veil

Hies to the cliffs of Latmos once the Sun

Leaps from his ocean bed in fruitless chase

Of those pale flying feet which fade away in his em-  
brace.

And if my flute can breathe sweet melody,

We may behold Her face who long ago

Dwelt among men by the Ægean sea,

And whose sad house with pillaged portico

And friezeless wall and columns toppled down

Looms o'er the ruins of that fair and violet-cinctured  
town.

Spirit of Beauty ! tarry still a-while,

They are not dead, thine ancient votaries,  
Some few there are to whom thy radiant smile

Is better than a thousand victories,  
Though all the nobly slain of Waterloo  
Rise up in wrath against them ! tarry still, there are a  
few.

Who for thy sake would give their manlihood

And consecrate their being, I at least  
Have done so, made thy lips my daily food,  
And in thy temples found a goodlier feast  
Than this starved age can give me, spite of all  
Its new-found creeds so sceptical and so dogmatical.

Here not Cephissos, not Ilissos flows,

The woods of white Colonos are not here,  
On our bleak hills the olive never blows,

No simple priest conducts his lowing steer  
Up the steep marble way, nor through the town  
Do laughing maidens bear to thee the crocus-flowered  
gown.

Yet tarry ! for the boy who loved thee best,  
Whose very name should be a memory  
To make thee linger, sleeps in silent rest  
Beneath the Roman walls, and melody  
Still mourns her sweetest lyre, none can play  
The lute of Adonais, with his lips Song passed away.

Nay, when Keats died the Muses still had left  
One silver voice to sing his threnody,  
But ah ! too soon of it we were bereft  
When on that riven night and stormy sea  
Panthea claimed her singer as her own,  
And slew the mouth that praised her ; since which time we  
walk alone,

Save for that fiery heart, that morning star  
Of re-arisen England, whose clear eye  
Saw from our tottering throne and waste of war  
The grand Greek limbs of young Democracy  
Rise mightily like Hesperus and bring  
The great Republic ! him at least thy love hath taught to  
sing,



And he hath been with thee at Thessaly,  
And seen white Atalanta fleet of foot  
In passionless and fierce virginity  
Hunting the tuskéd boar, his honied lute  
Hath pierced the cavern of the hollow hill,  
And Venus laughs to know one knee will bow before her  
still.

And he hath kissed the lips of Proserpine,  
And sung the Galilæan's requiem,  
That wounded forehead dashed with blood and wine  
He hath discrowned, the Ancient Gods in him  
Have found their last, most ardent worshipper,  
And the new Sign grows grey and dim before its con-  
queror.

Spirit of Beauty ! tarry with us still,  
It is not quenched the torch of poesy,  
The star that shook above the Eastern hill  
Holds unassailed its argent armoury  
From all the gathering gloom and fretful fight —  
O tarry with us still ! for through the long and common  
night,

Morris, our sweet and simple Chaucer's child,  
Dear heritor of Spenser's tuneful reed,  
With soft and sylvan pipe has oft beguiled  
The weary soul of man in troublous need,  
And from the far and flowerless fields of ice  
Has brought fair flowers meet to make an earthly  
paradise.

We know them all, Gudrun the strong men's bride,  
Aslaug and Olafson we know them all,  
How giant Grettir fought and Sigurd died,  
And what enchantment held the king in thrall  
When lonely Brynhild wrestled with the powers  
That war against all passion, ah ! how oft through summer  
hours,

Long listless summer hours when the noon  
Being enamoured of a damask rose  
Forgets to journey westward, till the moon  
The pale usurper of its tribute grows  
From a thin sickle to a silver shield  
And chides its loitering car — how oft, in some cool grassy  
field

Far from the cricket-ground and noisy eight,  
At Bagley, where the rustling bluebells come  
Almost before the blackbird finds a mate  
And overstay the swallow, and the hum  
Of many murmuring bees flits through the leaves,  
Have I lain poring on the dreamy tales his fancy  
weaves,

And through their unreal woes and mimic pain  
Wept for myself, and so was purified,  
And in their simple mirth grew glad again ;  
For as I sailed upon that pictured tide  
The strength and splendour of the storm was mine  
Without the storm's red ruin, for the singer is divine,

The little laugh of water falling down  
Is not so musical, the clammy gold  
Close hoarded in the tiny waxen town  
Has less of sweetness in it, and the old  
Half-withered reeds that waved in Arcady  
Touched by his lips break forth again to fresher har-  
mony.

Spirit of Beauty tarry yet a-while !

Although the cheating merchants of the mart  
With iron roads profane our lovely isle,  
And break on whirling wheels the limbs of Art,  
Ay ! though the crowded factories beget  
The blind-worm Ignorance that slays the soul, O tarry  
yet !

For One at least there is, — He bears his name  
From Dante and the seraph Gabriel, —  
Whose double laurels burn with deathless flame  
To light thine altar ; He too loves thee well,  
Who saw old Merlin lured in Vivien's snare,  
And the white feet of angels coming down the golden  
stair,

Loves thee so well, that all the World for him  
A gorgeous-coloured vestiture must wear,  
And Sorrow take a purple diadem,  
Or else be no more Sorrow, and Despair  
Gild its own thorns, and Pain, like Adon, be  
Even in anguish beautiful ; — such is the empery

Which Painters hold, and such the heritage

This gentle solemn Spirit doth possess,  
Being a better mirror of his age

In all his pity, love, and weariness,  
Than those who can but copy common things,  
And leave the Soul unpainted with its mighty question-  
ings.

But they are few, and all romance has flown,

And men can prophesy about the sun,  
And lecture on his arrows — how, alone,

Through a waste void the soulless atoms run,  
How from each tree its weeping nymph has fled,  
And that no more 'mid English reeds a Naiad shows her  
head.

Methinks these new Actæons boast too soon

That they have spied on beauty ; what if we  
Have analyzed the rainbow, robbed the moon

Of her most ancient, chastest mystery,  
Shall I, the last Endymion, lose all hope  
Because rude eyes peer at my mistress through a tele-  
scope !

What profit if this scientific age  
    Burst through our gates with all its retinue  
Of modern miracles ! Can it assuage  
    One lover's breaking heart? what can it do  
To make one life more beautiful, one day  
More god-like in its period? but now the Age of Clay

Returns in horrid cycle, and the earth  
    Hath borne again a noisy progeny  
Of ignorant Titans, whose ungodly birth  
    Hurls them against the august hierarchy  
Which sat upon Olympus, to the Dust  
They have appealed, and to that barren arbiter they  
    must

Repair for judgment, let them, if they can,  
    From Natural Warfare and insensate Chance,  
Create the new Ideal rule for man !  
    Methinks that was not my inheritance ;  
For I was nurtured otherwise, my soul  
Passes from higher heights of life to a more supreme  
    goal.

Lo ! while we spake the earth did turn away  
Her visage from the God, and Hecate's boat  
Rose silver-laden, till the jealous day  
Blew all its torches out : I did not note  
The waning hours, to young Endymions  
Time's palsied fingers count in vain his rosary of suns ! —

Mark how the yellow iris wearily  
Leans back its throat, as though it would be kissed  
By its false chamberer, the dragon-fly,  
Who, like a blue vein on a girl's white wrist,  
Sleeps on that snowy primrose of the night,  
Which 'gins to flush with crimson shame, and die beneath  
the light.

Come let us go, against the pallid shield  
Of the wan sky the almond blossoms gleam,  
The corn-crake nested in the unmown field  
Answers its mate, across the misty stream  
On fitful wing the startled curlews fly,  
And in his sedgy bed the lark, for joy that Day is nigh,

Scatters the pearléd dew from off the grass,  
In tremulous ecstasy to greet the sun,  
Who soon in gilded panoply will pass  
Forth from yon orange-curtained pavilion  
Hung in the burning east, see, the red rim  
O'ertops the expectant hills ! it is the God ! for love of  
him

Already the shrill lark is out of sight,  
Flooding with waves of song this silent dell, —  
Ah ! there is something more in that bird's flight  
Than could be tested in a crucible ! —  
But the air freshens, let us go, — why soon  
The woodmen will be here ; how we have lived this night  
of June !



ROSA MYSTICA.



## ROSA MYSTICA.

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### REQUIESCAT.

TREAD lightly, she is near  
Under the snow,  
Speak gently, she can hear  
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair  
Tarnished with rust,  
She that was young and fair  
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,  
She hardly knew  
She was a woman, so  
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,  
Lie on her breast,  
I vex my heart alone  
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear  
Lyre or sonnet,  
All my life 's buried here,  
Heap earth upon it.

AVIGNON.

## SONNET ON APPROACHING ITALY.

I REACHED the Alps : the soul within me burned  
Italia, my Italia, at thy name :  
And when from out the mountain's heart I came  
And saw the land for which my life had yearned,  
I laughed as one who some great prize had earned :  
And musing on the story of thy fame  
I watched the day, till marked with wounds of flame  
The turquoise sky to burnished gold was turned,  
The pine-trees waved as waves a woman's hair,  
And in the orchards every twining spray  
Was breaking into flakes of blossoming foam :  
But when I knew that far away at Rome  
In evil bonds a second Peter lay,  
I wept to see the land so very fair.

TURIN.

## SAN MINIATO.

SEE, I have climbed the mountain side  
Up to this holy house of God,  
Where once that Angel-Painter trod  
Who saw the heavens opened wide,

And throned upon the crescent moon  
The Virginal white Queen of Grace,—  
Mary! could I but see thy face  
Death could not come at all too soon.

O crowned by God with thorns and pain!  
Mother of Christ! O mystic wife!  
My heart is weary of this life  
And over-sad to sing again.

O crowned by God with love and flame!  
O crowned by Christ the Holy One!  
O listen ere the searching sun  
Show to the world my sin and shame.

## AVE MARIA PLENA GRATIA.

WAS this His coming ! I had hoped to see  
A scene of wondrous glory, as was told  
Of some great God who in a rain of gold  
Broke open bars and fell on Danae :  
Or a dread vision as when Semele  
Sickening for love and unappeased desire  
Prayed to see God's clear body, and the fire  
Caught her white limbs and slew her utterly :  
With such glad dreams I sought this holy place,  
And now with wondering eyes and heart I stand  
Before this supreme mystery of Love :  
A kneeling girl with passionless pale face,  
An angel with a lily in his hand,  
And over both with outstretched wings the Dove.

FLORENCE.

## ITALIA.

ITALIA ! thou art fallen, though with sheen  
Of battle-spears thy clamorous armies stride  
From the north Alps to the Sicilian tide !  
Ay ! fallen, though the nations hail thee Queen  
Because rich gold in every town is seen,  
And on thy sapphire lake in tossing pride  
Of wind-filled vans thy myriad galleys ride  
Beneath one flag of red and white and green.  
O Fair and Strong ! O Strong and Fair in vain !  
Look southward where Rome's desecrated town  
Lies mourning for her God-anointed King !  
Look heaven-ward ! shall God allow this thing ?  
Nay ! but some flame-girt Raphael shall come down,  
And smite the Spoiler with the sword of pain.

VENICE.



## SONNET

WRITTEN IN HOLY WEEK AT GENOA.

I WANDERED in Scoglietto's green retreat,  
The oranges on each o'erhanging spray  
Burned as bright lamps of gold to shame the day ;  
Some startled bird with fluttering wings and fleet  
Made snow of all the blossoms, at my feet  
Like silver moons the pale narcissi lay :  
And the curved waves that streaked the sapphire bay  
Laughed i' the sun, and life seemed very sweet.  
Outside the young boy-priest passed singing clear,  
"Jesus the Son of Mary has been slain,  
O come and fill his sepulchre with flowers."  
Ah, God ! Ah, God ! those dear Hellenic hours  
Had drowned all memory of Thy bitter pain,  
The Cross, the Crown, the Soldiers, and the Spear.

## ROME UNVISITED.

## I.

THE corn has turned from grey to red,  
Since first my spirit wandered forth  
From the drear cities of the north,  
And to Italia's mountains fled.

And here I set my face towards home,  
For all my pilgrimage is done,  
Although, methinks, yon blood-red sun  
Marshals the way to Holy Rome.

O Blessed Lady, who dost hold  
Upon the seven hills thy reign !  
O Mother without blot or stain,  
Crowned with bright crowns of triple gold !

O Roma, Roma, at thy feet  
I lay this barren gift of song !  
For, ah ! the way is steep and long  
That leads unto thy sacred street.

## II.

And yet what joy it were for me  
    To turn my feet unto the south,  
    And journeying towards the Tiber mouth  
To kneel again at Fiesole !

And wandering through the tangled pines  
    That break the gold of Arno's stream,  
    To see the purple mist and gleam  
Of morning on the Apennines.

By many a vineyard-hidden home,  
    Orchard, and olive-garden grey,  
    Till from the drear Campagna's way  
The seven hills bear up the dome !

## III.

A pilgrim from the northern seas —  
What joy for me to seek alone  
The wondrous Temple, and the throne  
Of Him who holds the awful keys !

When, bright with purple and with gold,  
Come priest and holy Cardinal,  
And borne above the heads of all  
The gentle Shepherd of the Fold.

O joy to see before I die  
The only God-anointed King,  
And hear the silver trumpets ring  
A triumph as He passes by !

Or at the altar of the shrine  
Holds high the mystic sacrifice,  
And shows a God to human eyes  
Beneath the veil of bread and wine.

## IV.

For lo, what changes time can bring !  
The cycles of revolving years  
May free my heart from all its fears, —  
And teach my lips a song to sing.

Before yon field of trembling gold  
Is garnered into dusty sheaves,  
Or ere the autumn's scarlet leaves  
Flutter as birds adown the wold,

I may have run the glorious race,  
And caught the torch while yet aflame,  
And called upon the holy name  
Of Him who now doth hide His face.

## URBS SACRA ÆTERNA.

ROME ! what a scroll of History thine has been  
In the first days thy sword republican  
Ruled the whole world for many an age's span :  
Then of thy peoples thou wert crownèd Queen,  
Till in thy streets the bearded Goth was seen ;  
And now upon thy walls the breezes fan  
(Ah, city crowned by God, discrowned by man !)  
The hated flag of red and white and green.  
When was thy glory ! when in search for power  
Thine eagles flew to greet the double sun,  
And all the nations trembled at thy rod ?  
Nay, but thy glory tarried for this hour,  
When pilgrims kneel before the Holy One,  
The prisoned shepherd of the Church of God.

## SONNET.

ON HEARING THE DIES IRÆ SUNG IN THE  
SISTINE CHAPEL.

NAY, Lord, not thus ! white lilies in the spring,  
Sad olive-groves, or silver-breasted dove,  
Teach me more clearly of Thy life and love  
Than terrors of red flame and thundering.  
The empurpled vines dear memories of Thee bring :  
A bird at evening flying to its nest,  
Tells me of One who had no place of rest :  
I think it is of Thee the sparrows sing.  
Come rather on some autumn afternoon,  
When red and brown are burnished on the leaves,  
And the fields echo to the gleaner's song,  
Come when the splendid fulness of the moon  
Looks down upon the rows of golden sheaves,  
And reap Thy harvest : we have waited long.

## EASTER DAY.

THE silver trumpets rang across the Dome :

The people knelt upon the ground with awe :

And borne upon the necks of men I saw,

Like some great God, the Holy Lord of Rome.

Priest-like, he wore a robe more white than foam,

And, king-like, swathed himself in royal red,

Three crowns of gold rose high upon his head :

In splendour and in light the Pope passed home.

My heart stole back across wide wastes of years

To One who wandered by a lonely sea,

And sought in vain for any place of rest :

“ Foxes have holes, and every bird its nest,

“ I, only I, must wander wearily,

And bruise my feet, and drink wine salt with tears.”



## E TENEBRIS.

COME down, O Christ, and help me ! reach thy hand,  
For I am drowning in a stormier sea  
Than Simon on thy lake of Galilee :  
The wine of life is spilt upon the sand,  
My heart is as some famine-murdered land,  
Whence all good things have perished utterly,  
And well I know my soul in Hell must lie  
If I this night before God's throne should stand.  
" He sleeps perchance, or rideth to the chase,  
Like Baal, when his prophets howled that name  
From morn to noon on Carmel's smitten height."  
Nay, peace, I shall behold before the night,  
The feet of brass, the robe more white than flame,  
The wounded hands, the weary human face.

## VITA NUOVA.

I STOOD by the unvintageable sea  
Till the wet waves drenched face and hair with spray,  
The long red fires of the dying day  
Burned in the west ; the wind piped drearily ;  
And to the land the clamorous gulls did flee :  
“ Alas ! ” I cried, “ my life is full of pain,  
And who can garner fruit or golden grain,  
From these waste fields which travail ceaselessly ! ”  
My nets gaped wide with many a break and flaw  
Nathless I threw them as my final cast  
Into the sea, and waited for the end.  
When lo ! a sudden glory ! and I saw  
The argent splendour of white limbs ascend,  
And in that joy forgot my tortured past.

## MADONNA MIA.

A LILY-GIRL, not made for this world's pain,  
With brown, soft hair close braided by her ears,  
And longing eyes half veiled by slumberous tears  
Like bluest water seen through mists of rain :  
Pale cheeks whereon no love hath left its stain,  
Red underlip drawn in for fear of love,  
And white throat, whiter than the silvered dove,  
Through whose wan marble creeps one purple vein.  
Yet, though my lips shall praise her without cease,  
Even to kiss her feet I am not bold,  
Being o'ershadowed by the wings of awe.  
Like Dante, when he stood with Beatrice  
Beneath the flaming Lion's breast, and saw  
The seventh Crystal, and the Stair of Gold.

## THE NEW HELEN.

WHERE hast thou been since round the walls of Troy  
The sons of God fought in that great emprise?  
Why dost thou walk our common earth again?  
Hast thou forgotten that impassioned boy,  
His purple galley, and his Tyrian men,  
And treacherous Aphrodite's mocking eyes?  
For surely it was thou, who, like a star  
Hung in the silver silence of the night,  
Didst lure the Old World's chivalry and might  
Into the clamorous crimson waves of war!

Or didst thou rule the fire-laden moon?  
In amorous Sidon was thy temple built  
Over the light and laughter of the sea?  
Where, behind lattice scarlet-wrought and gilt,  
Some brown-limbed girl did weave thee tapestry,  
All through the waste and wearied hours of noon;

Till her wan cheek with flame of passion burned,  
And she rose up the sea-washed lips to kiss  
Of some glad Cyprian sailor, safe returned  
From Calpé and the cliffs of Herakles !

No ! thou art Helen, and none other one !  
It was for thee that young Sarpedôn died,  
And Memnôn's manhood was untimely spent ;  
It was for thee gold-crested Hector tried  
With Thetis' child that evil race to run,  
In the last year of thy beleaguerment ;  
Ay ! even now the glory of thy fame  
Burns in those fields of trampled asphodel,  
Where the high lords whom Ilion knew so well  
Clash ghostly shields, and call upon thy name.

Where hast thou been ? in that enchanted land  
Whose slumbering vales forlorn Calypso knew,  
Where never mower rose to greet the day  
But all unswathed the trammelling grasses grew,  
And the sad shepherd saw the tall corn stand  
Till summer's red had changed to withered gray ?

Didst thou lie there by some Lethæan stream  
Deep brooding on thine ancient memory,  
The crash of broken spears, the fiery gleam  
From shivered helm, the Grecian battle-cry.

Nay, thou wert hidden in that hollow hill  
With one who is forgotten utterly,  
That discrowned Queen men call the Erycine ;  
Hidden away that never mightst thou see  
The face of Her, before whose mouldering shrine  
To-day at Rome the silent nations kneel ;  
Who gat from Love no joyous gladdening,  
But only Love's intolerable pain,  
Only a sword to pierce her heart in twain,  
Only the bitterness of child-bearing.

The lotos-leaves which heal the wounds of Death  
Lie in thy hand ; O, be thou kind to me,  
While yet I know the summer of my days ;  
For hardly can my tremulous lips draw breath  
To fill the silver trumpet with thy praise,  
So bowed am I before thy mystery ;

So bowed and broken on Love's terrible wheel,  
That I have lost all hope and heart to sing,  
Yet care I not what ruin time may bring  
If in thy temple thou wilt let me kneel.

Alas, alas, thou wilt not tarry here,  
But, like that bird, the servant of the sun,  
Who flies before the northwind and the night,  
So wilt thou fly our evil land and drear,  
Back to the tower of thine old delight,  
And the red lips of young Euphorion ;  
Nor shall I ever see thy face again,  
But in this poisonous garden must I stay,  
Crowning my brows with the thorn-crown of pain,  
Till all my loveless life shall pass away.

O Helen ! Helen ! Helen ! yet awhile,  
Yet for a little while, O, tarry here,  
Till the dawn cometh and the shadows flee !  
For in the gladsome sunlight of thy smile  
Of heaven or hell I have no thought or fear,  
Seeing I know no other god but thee :

No other god save him, before whose feet  
In nets of gold the tired planets move,  
The incarnate spirit of spiritual love  
Who in thy body holds his joyous seat.

Thou wert not born as common women are !  
But, girt with silver splendour of the foam,  
Didst from the depths of sapphire seas arise !  
And at thy coming some immortal star,  
Bearded with flame, blazed in the Eastern skies,  
And waked the shepherds on thine island-home.  
Thou shalt not die : no asps of Egypt creep  
Close at thy heels to taint the delicate air ;  
No sullen-blooming poppies stain thy hair,  
Those scarlet heralds of eternal sleep.

Lily of love, pure and inviolate !  
Tower of ivory ! red rose of fire !  
Thou hast come down our darkness to illumine :  
For we, close-caught in the wide nets of Fate,  
Wearied with waiting for the World's Desire,  
Aimlessly wandered in the house of gloom,



Aimlessly sought some slumberous anodyne  
For wasted lives, for lingering wretchedness,  
Till we beheld thy re-arisen shrine,  
And the white glory of thy loveliness.



THE BURDEN OF ITYS.



THIS English Thames is holier far than Rome,  
Those harebells like a sudden flush of sea  
Breaking across the woodland, with the foam  
Of meadow-sweet and white anemone  
To fleck their blue waves, — God is likelier there,  
Than hidden in that crystal-hearted star the pale monks  
bear !

Those violet-gleaming butterflies that take  
Yon creamy lily for their pavilion  
Are monsignores, and where the rushes shake  
A lazy pike lies basking in the sun  
His eyes half-shut, — He is some mitred old  
Bishop *in partibus* ! look at those gaudy scales all green  
and gold.

The wind the restless prisoner of the trees  
Does well for Palæstrina, one would say  
The mighty master's hands were on the keys  
Of the Maria organ, which they play  
When early on some sapphire Easter morn  
In a high litter red as blood or sin the Pope is  
borne

From his dark House out to the Balcony  
Above the bronze gates and the crowded square,  
Whose very fountains seem for ecstasy  
To toss their silver lances in the air,  
And stretching out weak hands to East and West  
In vain sends peace to peaceless lands, to restless nations  
rest.

Is not yon lingering orange afterglow  
That stays to vex the moon more fair than all  
Rome's lordliest pageants ! strange, a year ago  
I knelt before some crimson Cardinal  
Who bare the Host across the Esquiline,  
And now — those common poppies in the wheat seem  
twice as fine.

The blue-green beanfields yonder, tremulous  
With the last shower, sweeter perfume bring  
Through this cool evening than the odorous  
Flame-jewelled censers the young deacons swing,  
When the grey priest unlocks the curtained shrine,  
And makes God's body from the common fruit of corn  
and vine.

Poor Fra Giovanni bawling at the mass  
Were out of tune now, for a small brown bird  
Sings overhead, and through the long cool grass  
I see that throbbing throat which once I heard  
On starlit hills of flower-starred Arcady,  
Once where the white and crescent sand of Salamis meets  
sea.

Sweet is the swallow twittering on the eaves  
At daybreak, when the mower whets his scythe,  
And stock-doves murmur, and the milkmaid leaves  
Her little lonely bed, and carols blithe  
To see the heavy-lowing cattle wait  
Stretching their huge and dripping mouths across the  
farmyard gate.

And sweet the hops upon the Kentish leas,  
And sweet the wind that lifts the new-mown hay,  
And sweet the fretful swarms of grumbling bees  
That round and round the linden blossoms play ;  
And sweet the heifer breathing in the stall,  
And the green bursting figs that hang upon the red-brick  
wall.

And sweet to hear the cuckoo mock the spring  
While the last violet loiters by the well,  
And sweet to hear the shepherd Daphnis sing  
The song of Linus through a sunny dell  
Of warm Arcadia where the corn is gold  
And the slight lithe-limbed reapers dance about the  
wattled fold.

And sweet with young Lycoris to recline  
In some Illyrian valley far away,  
Where canopied on herbs amaracine  
We too might waste the summer-trancèd day  
Matching our reeds in sportive rivalry,  
While far beneath us frets the troubled purple of the  
sea.



But sweeter far if silver-sandalled foot

Of some long-hidden God should ever tread

The Nuneham meadows, if with reeded flute

Pressed to his lips some Faun might raise his head

By the green water-flags, ah ! sweet indeed

To see the heavenly herdsman call his white-fleeced flock  
to feed.

Then sing to me thou tuneful chorister,

Though what thou sing'st be thine own requiem !

Tell me thy tale thou hapless chronicler

Of thine own tragedies ! do not contemn

These unfamiliar haunts, this English field,

For many a lovely coronal our northern isle can  
yield,

Which Grecian meadows know not, many a rose,

Which all day long in vales Æolian

A lad might seek in vain for, overgrows

Our hedges like a wanton courtezan

Unthrifty of her beauty, lilies too

Ilissus never mirrored star our streams, and cockles  
blue

Dot the green wheat which, though they are the signs  
 For swallows going south, would never spread  
 Their azure tents between the Attic vines ;  
 Even that little weed of ragged red,  
 Which bids the robin pipe, in Arcady  
 Would be a trespasser, and many an unsung elegy

Sleeps in the reeds that fringe our winding Thames  
 Which to awake were sweeter ravishment  
 Than ever Syrinx wept for, diadem's  
 Of brown bee-studded orchids which were meant  
 For Cytheræa's brows are hidden here  
 Unknown to Cytheræa, and by yonder pasturing steer

There is a tiny yellow daffodil,  
 The butterfly can see it from afar,  
 Although one summer evening's dew could fill  
 Its little cup twice over ere the star  
 Had called the lazy shepherd to his fold  
 And be no prodigal, each leaf is flecked with spotted  
 gold

As if Jove's gorgeous leman Danaë  
 Hot from his gilded arms had stooped to kiss  
 The trembling petals, or young Mercury  
 Low-flying to the dusky ford of Dis  
 Had with one feather of his pinions  
 Just brushed them! — the slight stem which bears the  
 burden of its suns

Is hardly thicker than the gossamer,  
 Or poor Arachne's silver tapestry, —  
 Men say it bloomed upon the sepulchre  
 Of One I sometime worshipped, but to me  
 It seems to bring diviner memories  
 Of faun-loved Heliconian glades and blue nymph-  
 haunted seas,

Of an untrodden vale at Tempe where  
 On the clear river's marge Narcissus lies,  
 The tangle of the forest in his hair,  
 The silence of the woodland in his eyes,  
 Wooing that drifting imagery which is  
 No sooner kissed than broken, memories of Salmacis

Who is not boy or girl and yet is both,  
Fed by two fires and unsatisfied  
Through their excess, each passion being loth  
For love's own sake to leave the other's side  
Yet killing love by staying, memories  
Of Oreads peeping through the leaves of silent moon-  
lit trees,

Of lonely Ariadne on the wharf  
At Naxos, when she saw the treacherous crew  
Far out at sea, and waved her crimson scarf  
And called false Theseus back again nor knew  
That Dionysos on an amber pard  
Was close behind her, memories of what Maeonia's  
bard

With sightless eyes beheld, the wall of Troy,  
Queen Helen lying in the carven room,  
And at her side an amorous red-lipped boy  
Trimming with dainty hand his helmet's plume,  
And far away the moil, the shout, the groan,  
As Hector shielded off the spear and Ajax hurled the  
stone ;

Of wingèd Perseus with his flawless sword  
Cleaving the snaky tresses of the witch,  
And all those tales imperishably stored  
In little Grecian urns, freightage more rich  
Than any gaudy galleon of Spain  
Bare from the Indies ever! these at least bring back  
again,

For well I know they are not dead at all,  
The ancient Gods of Grecian poesy,  
They are asleep, and when they hear thee call  
Will wake and think 't is very Thessaly,  
This Thames the Daulian waters, this cool glade  
The yellow-irised mead where once young Itys laughed  
and played.

If it was thou dear jasmine-cradled bird  
Who from the leafy stillness of thy throne  
Sang to the wondrous boy, until he heard  
The horn of Atalanta faintly blown  
Across the Cumner hills, and wandering  
Through Bagley wood at evening found the Attic poets'  
spring, —

Ah ! tiny sober-suited advocate

That pleadest for the moon against the day !

If thou didst make the shepherd seek his mate

On that sweet questing, when Proserpina

Forgot it was not Sicily and leant

Across the mossy Sandford stile in ravished wonder-  
ment, —

Light-winged and bright-eyed miracle of the wood !

If ever thou didst soothe with melody

One of that little clan, that brotherhood

Which loved the morning-star of Tuscany

More than the perfect sun of Raphael

And is immortal, sing to me ! for I too love thee well,

Sing on ! sing on ! let the dull world grow young,

Let elemental things take form again,

And the old shapes of Beauty walk among

The simple garths and open crofts, as when

The son of Leto bare the willow rod,

And the soft sheep and shaggy goats followed the boy-  
ish God.

Sing on ! sing on ! and Bacchus will be here  
    Astride upon his gorgeous Indian throne,  
And over whimpering tigers shake the spear  
    With yellow ivy crowned and gummy cone,  
While at his side the wanton Bassarid  
Will throw the lion by the mane and catch the mountain  
    kid !

Sing on ! and I will wear the leopard skin,  
    And steal the moonéd wings of Ashtaroth,  
Upon whose icy chariot we could win  
    Cithæron in an hour e'er the froth  
Has overbrimmed the wine-vat or the Faun  
Ceased from the treading ! ay, before the flickering  
    lamp of dawn

Has scared the hooting owlet to its nest,  
    And warned the bat to close its filmy vans,  
Some Mænad girl with vine-leaves on her breast  
    Will filch their beechnuts from the sleeping Pans  
So softly that the little nested thrush  
Will never wake, and then with shrilly laugh and leap  
    will rush

Down the green valley where the fallen dew  
Lies thick beneath the elm and count her store,  
Till the brown Satyrs in a jolly crew  
Trample the loosestrife down along the shore,  
And where their hornèd master sits in state  
Bring strawberries and bloomy plums upon a wicker  
crate !

Sing on ! and soon with passion-wearied face  
Through the cool leaves Apollo's lad will come,  
The Tyrian prince his bristled boar will chase  
Adown the chestnut-copses all a-bloom,  
And ivory-limbed, grey-eyed, with look of pride,  
After yon velvet-coated deer the virgin maid will ride.

Sing on ! and I the dying boy will see  
Stain with his purple blood the waxen bell  
That overweighs the jacinth, and to me  
The wretched Cyprian her woe will tell,  
And I will kiss her mouth and streaming eyes,  
And lead her to the myrtle-hidden grove where Adon  
lies !



Cry out aloud on Itys ! memory

That foster-brother of remorse and pain  
Drops poison in mine ear, — O to be free,  
To burn one's old ships ! and to launch again  
Into the white-plumed battle of the waves  
And fight old Proteus for the spoil of coral-flowered  
caves !

O for Medea with her poppied spell !

O for the secret of the Colchian shrine !

O for one leaf of that pale asphodel

Which binds the tired brows of Proserpine,  
And sheds such wondrous dewes at eve that she  
Dreams of the fields of Enna, by the far Sicilian sea,

Where oft the golden-girdled bee she chased

From lily to lily on the level mead,

Ere yet her sombre Lord had bid her taste

The deadly fruit of that pomegranate seed,

Ere the black steeds had harried her away

Down to the faint and flowerless land, the sick and sun-  
less day.)

O for one midnight and as paramour  
 The Venus of the little Melian farm !  
 O that some antique statue for one hour  
 Might wake to passion, and that I could charm  
 The Dawn at Florence from its dumb despair  
 Mix with those mighty limbs and make that giant breast  
 my lair !

Sing on ! sing on ! I would be drunk with life,  
 Drunk with the trampled vintage of my youth,  
 I would forget the wearying wasted strife,  
 The riven vale, the Gorgon eyes of Truth,  
 The prayerless vigil and the cry for prayer,  
 The barren gifts, the lifted arms, the dull insensate air !

Sing on ! sing on ! O feathered Niobe,  
 Thou canst make sorrow beautiful, and steal  
 From joy its sweetest music, not as we  
 Who by dead voiceless silence strive to heal  
 Our too untented wounds, and do but keep  
 Pain barricadoed in our hearts, and murder pillowed  
 sleep.

Sing louder yet, why must I still behold

The wan white face of that deserted Christ,  
Whose bleeding hands my hands did once enfold,

Whose smitten lips my lips so oft have kissed,  
And now in mute and marble misery  
Sits in his lone dishonoured House and weeps, perchance  
for me.

O memory cast down thy wreathèd shell !

Break thy hoarse lute O sad Melpomene !

O sorrow sorrow keep thy cloistered cell

Nor dim with tears this limpid Castaly !

Cease, cease, sad bird, thou dost the forest wrong  
To vex its sylvan quiet with such wild impassioned  
song !

Cease, cease, or if 'tis anguish to be dumb

Take from the pastoral thrush her simpler air,  
Whose jocund carelessness doth more become

This English woodland than thy keen despair,  
Ah ! cease and let the northwind bear thy lay  
Back to the rocky hills of Thrace, the stormy Daulian  
bay.

A moment more, the startled leaves had stirred,  
Endymion would have passed across the mead  
Moonstruck with love, and this still Thames had heard  
Pan plash and paddle groping for some reed  
To lure from her blue cave that Naiad maid  
Who for such piping listens half in joy and half afraid.

A moment more, the waking dove had cooed,  
The silver daughter of the silver sea  
With the fond gyves of clinging hands had wooed  
Her wanton from the chase, and Dryope  
Had thrust aside the branches of her oak  
To see the lusty gold-haired lad rein in his snorting  
yoke.

A moment more, the trees had stooped to kiss  
Pale Daphne just awakening from the swoon  
Of tremulous laurels, lonely Salmacis  
Had bared his barren beauty to the moon,  
And through the vale with sad voluptuous smile  
Antinous had wandered, the red lotus of the Nile

Down leaning from his black and clustering hair  
To shade those slumberous eyelids' caverned bliss,  
Or else on yonder grassy slope with bare  
High-tuniced limbs unravished Artemis  
Had bade her hounds give tongue, and roused the deer  
From his green ambushade with shrill halloo and pricking  
spear.

Lie still, lie still, O passionate heart, lie still !  
O Melancholy, fold thy raven wing !  
O sobbing Dryad, from thy hollow hill  
Come not with such desponded answering !  
No more thou wingèd Marsyas complain,  
Apollo loveth not to hear such troubled songs of pain !

It was a dream, the glade is tenantless,  
No soft Ionian laughter moves the air,  
The Thames creeps on in sluggish leadenness,  
And from the copse left desolate and bare  
Fled is young Bacchus with his revelry,  
Yet still from Nuneham wood there comes that thrilling  
melody

So sad, that one might think a human heart  
    Brake in each separate note, a quality  
Which music sometimes has, being the Art  
    Which is most nigh to tears and memory,  
Poor mourning Philomel, what dost thou fear?  
Thy sister doth not haunt these fields, Pandion is not  
    here,

Here is no cruel Lord with murderous blade,  
    No woven web of bloody heraldries,  
But mossy dells for roving comrades made,  
    Warm valleys where the tired student lies  
With half-shut book, and many a winding walk  
Where rustic lovers stray at eve in happy simple talk.

The harmless rabbit gambols with its young  
    Across the trampled towing-path, where late  
A troop of laughing boys in jostling throng  
    Cheered with their noisy cries the racing eight ;  
The gossamer, with ravelled silver threads,  
Works at its little loom, and from the dusky red-eaved  
    sheds

Of the lone Farm a flickering light shines out  
Where the swinked shepherd drives his bleating flock  
Back to their wattled sheep-cotes, a faint shout  
Comes from some Oxford boat at Sandford lock,  
And starts the moor-hen from the sedgy rill,  
And the dim lengthening shadows flit like swallows up the  
hill.

The heron passes homeward to the mere,  
The blue mist creeps among the shivering trees,  
Gold world by world the silent stars appear,  
And like a blossom blown before the breeze,  
A white moon drifts across the shimmering sky,  
Mute arbitress of all thy sad, thy rapturous threnody.

She does not heed thee, wherefore should she heed,  
She knows Endymion is not far away,  
'Tis I, 'tis I, whose soul is as the reed  
Which has no message of its own to play,  
So pipes another's bidding, it is I,  
Drifting with every wind on the wide sea of misery.

Ah ! the brown bird has ceased : one exquisite trill  
About the sombre woodland seems to cling,  
Dying in music, else the air is still,  
So still that one might hear the bat's small wing  
Wander and wheel above the pines, or tell  
Each tiny dewdrop dripping from the blue-bell's brim-  
ming cell.

And far away across the lengthening wold,  
Across the willowy flats and thickets brown,  
Magdalen's tall tower tipped with tremulous gold  
Marks the long High Street of the little town,  
And warns me to return ; I must not wait,  
Hark ! 'tis the curfew booming from the bell at Christ  
Church gate.



IMPRESSION DU MATIN.



## IMPRESSION DU MATIN.

THE Thames nocturne of blue and gold  
    Changed to a Harmony in grey :  
    A barge with ochre-coloured hay  
Dropt from the wharf : and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down  
    The bridges, till the houses' walls  
    Seemed changed to shadows, and S. Paul's  
Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang  
    Of waking life ; the streets were stirred  
    With country waggons : and a bird  
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

But one pale woman all alone,  
    The daylight kissing her wan hair,  
    Loitered beneath the gas lamps' flare,  
With lips of flame and heart of stone.

## MAGDALEN WALKS.

THE little white clouds are racing over the sky,  
And the fields are strewn with the gold of the flower of  
March,

The daffodil breaks under foot, and the tasselled larch  
Sways and swings as the thrush goes hurrying by.

A delicate odour is borne on the wings of the morning  
breeze,

The odour of leaves, and of grass, and of newly up-  
turned earth,

The birds are singing for joy of the Spring's glad birth,  
Hopping from branch to branch on the rocking trees.

And all the woods are alive with the murmur and sound of  
Spring,

And the rosebud breaks into pink on the climbing  
briar,

And the crocus-bed is a quivering moon of fire  
Girdled round with the belt of an amethyst ring.

And the plane to the pine-tree is whispering some tale of  
love

Till it rustles with laughter and tosses its mantle of  
green,

And the gloom of the wych-elm's hollow is lit with the  
iris sheen

Of the burnished rainbow throat and the silver breast of  
a dove.

See ! the lark starts up from his bed in the meadow there,  
Breaking the gossamer threads and the nets of dew,  
And flashing a-down the river, a flame of blue !  
The kingfisher flies like an arrow, and wounds the air.

## ATHANASIA.

To that gaunt House of Art which lacks for naught  
 Of all the great things men have saved from Time,  
 The withered body of a girl was brought

Dead ere the world's glad youth had touched its prime,  
 And seen by lonely Arabs lying hid  
 In the dim womb of some black pyramid.

But when they had unloosed the linen band

Which swathed the Egyptian's body, — lo ! was found  
 Closed in the wasted hollow of her hand

A little seed, which sown in English ground  
 Did wondrous snow of starry blossoms bear,  
 And spread rich odours through our springtide air.

With such strange arts this flower did allure

That all forgotten was the asphodel,  
 And the brown bee, the lily's paramour,  
 Forsook the cup where he was wont to dwell,

For not a thing of earth it seemed to be,  
But stolen from some heavenly Arcady.

In vain the sad narcissus, wan and white  
At its own beauty, hung across the stream,  
The purple dragon-fly had no delight  
With its gold dust to make his wings a-gleam,  
Ah! no delight the jasmine-bloom to kiss,  
Or brush the rain-pearls from the eucharis.

For love of it the passionate nightingale  
Forgot the hills of Thrace, the cruel king,  
And the pale dove no longer cared to sail  
Through the wet woods at time of blossoming,  
But round this flower of Egypt sought to float,  
With silvered wing and amethystine throat.

While the hot sun blazed in his tower of blue  
A cooling wind crept from the land of snows,  
And the warm south with tender tears of dew  
Drenched its white leaves when Hesperos uprose  
Amid those sea-green meadows of the sky  
On which the scarlet bars of sunset lie.

But when o'er wastes of lily-haunted field  
The tired birds had stayed their amorous tune,  
And broad and glittering like an argent shield  
High in the sapphire heavens hung the moon,  
Did no strange dream or evil memory make  
Each tremulous petal of its blossoms shake?

Ah no! to this bright flower a thousand years  
Seemed but the lingering of a summer's day,  
It never knew the tide of cankering fears  
Which turn a boy's gold hair to withered grey,  
The dread desire of death it never knew,  
Or how all folk that they were born must rue.

For we to death with pipe and dancing go,  
Nor would we pass the ivory gate again,  
As some sad river wearied of its flow  
Through the dull plains, the haunts of common men,  
Leaps lover-like into the terrible sea!  
And counts it gain to die so gloriously.

We mar our lordly strength in barren strife  
With the world's legions led by clamorous care,



It never feels decay but gathers life

From the pure sunlight and the supreme air,  
We live beneath Time's wasting sovereignty,  
It is the child of all eternity.

## SERENADE.

(FOR MUSIC.)

THE western wind is blowing fair

Across the dark Ægean sea,

And at the secret marble stair

My Tyrian galley waits for thee.

Come down ! the purple sail is spread,

The watchman sleeps within the town,

O leave thy lily-flowered bed,

O Lady mine come down, come down !

She will not come, I know her well,

Of lover's vows she hath no care,

And little good a man can tell

Of one so cruel and so fair.

True love is but a woman's toy,

They never know the lover's pain,

And I who loved as loves a boy

Must love in vain, must love in vain.

O noble pilot tell me true  
Is that the sheen of golden hair?  
Or is it but the tangled dew  
That binds the passion-flowers there?  
Good sailor come and tell me now  
Is that my Lady's lily hand?  
Or is it but the gleaming prow,  
Or is it but the silver sand?

No ! no ! 'tis not the tangled dew,  
'Tis not the silver-fretted sand,  
It is my own dear Lady true  
With golden hair and lily hand !  
O noble pilot steer for Troy,  
Good sailor ply the labouring oar,  
This is the Queen of life and joy  
Whom we must bear from Grecian shore !

The waning sky grows faint and blue,  
It wants an hour still of day,  
Aboard ! aboard ! my gallant crew,  
O Lady mine away ! away !

O noble pilot steer for Troy,  
    Good sailor ply the labouring oar,  
O loved as only loves a boy !  
    O loved for ever evermore !

## ENDYMION.

(FOR MUSIC.)

THE apple trees are hung with gold,  
     And birds are loud in Arcady,  
 The sheep lie bleating in the fold,  
 The wild goat runs across the wold,  
 But yesterday his love he told,  
     I know he will come back to me.  
 O rising moon ! O Lady moon !  
     Be you my lover's sentinel,  
     You cannot choose but know him well,  
 For he is shod with purple shoon,  
 You cannot choose but know my love,  
     For he a shepherd's crook doth bear,  
 And he is soft as any dove,  
     And brown and curly is his hair.

The turtle now has ceased to call  
     Upon her crimson-footed groom,  
 The grey wolf prowls about the stall,

The lily's singing seneschal  
Sleeps in the lily-bell, and all  
    The violet hills are lost in gloom.  
O risen moon ! O holy moon !  
    Stand on the top of Helice,  
    And if my own true love you see,  
Ah ! if you see the purple shoon,  
The hazel crook, the lad's brown hair,  
    The goat-skin wrapped about his arm,  
Tell him that I am waiting where  
    The rushlight glimmers in the Farm.

The falling dew is cold and chill,  
    And no bird sings in Arcady,  
The little fauns have left the hill,  
Even the tired daffodil  
Has closed its gilded doors, and still  
    My lover comes not back to me.  
False moon ! False moon ! O waning moon !  
    Where is my own true lover gone,  
    Where are the lips vermilion,  
The shepherd's crook, the purple shoon ?

Why spread that silver pavilion,  
Why wear that veil of drifting mist?  
Ah ! thou hast young Endymion,  
Thou hast the lips that should be kissed !

## LA BELLA DONNA DELLA MIA MENTE.

My limbs are wasted with a flame,  
My feet are sore with travelling,  
For calling on my Lady's name  
My lips have now forgot to sing.

O Linnet in the wild-rose brake  
Strain for my Love thy melody,  
O Lark sing louder for love's sake,  
My gentle Lady passeth by.

She is too fair for any man  
To see or hold his heart's delight,  
Fairer than Queen or courtezan  
Or moon-lit water in the night.

Her hair is bound with myrtle leaves,  
(Green leaves upon her golden hair !)  
Green grasses through the yellow sheaves  
Of autumn corn are not more fair.



Her little lips, more made to kiss  
Than to cry bitterly for pain,  
Are tremulous as brook-water is,  
Or roses after evening rain.

Her neck is like white melilote  
Flushing for pleasure of the sun,  
The throbbing of the linnet's throat  
Is not so sweet to look upon.

As a pomegranate, cut in twain,  
White-seeded, is her crimson mouth,  
Her cheeks are as the fading stain  
Where the peach reddens to the south.

O twining hands ! O delicate  
White body made for love and pain !  
O House of love ! O desolate  
Pale flower beaten by the rain !

## CHANSON.

A RING of gold and a milk-white dove  
 Are goodly gifts for thee,  
 And a hempen rope for your own love  
 To hang upon a tree.

For you a House of Ivory  
 (Roses are white in the rose-bower) !  
 A narrow bed for me to lie  
 (White, O white, is the hemlock flower) !

Myrtle and jessamine for you  
 (O the red rose is fair to see) !  
 For me the cypress and the rue  
 (Fairest of all is rose-mary) !

For you three lovers of your hand  
 (Green grass where a man lies dead) !  
 For me three paces on the sand  
 (Plant lilies at my head) !

**CHARMIDES.**



HE was a Grecian lad, who coming home  
With pulpy figs and wine from Sicily  
Stood at his galley's prow, and let the foam  
Blow through his crisp brown curls unconsciously,  
And holding wave and wind in boy's despite  
Peered from his dripping seat across the wet and stormy  
night

Till with the dawn he saw a burnished spear  
Like a thin thread of gold against the sky,  
And hoisted sail, and strained the creaking gear,  
And bade the pilot head her lustily  
Against the nor'west gale, and all day long  
Held on his way, and marked the rowers' time with meas-  
ured song,

And when the faint Corinthian hills were red  
Dropped anchor in a little sandy bay,  
And with fresh boughs of olive crowned his head,  
And brushed from cheek and throat the hoary spray,  
And washed his limbs with oil, and from the hold  
Brought out his linen tunic and his sandals brazen-soled,

And a rich robe stained with the fishes' juice  
Which of some swarthy trader he had bought  
Upon the sunny quay at Syracuse,  
And was with Tyrian broideries inwrought,  
And by the questioning merchants made his way  
Up through the soft and silver woods, and when the la-  
bouring day

Had spun its tangled web of crimson cloud,  
Clomb the high hill, and with swift silent feet  
Crept to the fane unnoticed by the crowd  
Of busy priests, and from some dark retreat  
Watched the young swains his frolic playmates bring  
The firstling of their little flock, and the shy shepherd  
fling

The crackling salt upon the flame, or hang  
His studded crook against the temple wall  
To Her who keeps away the ravenous fang  
Of the base wolf from homestead and from stall ;  
And then the clear-voiced maidens 'gan to sing,  
And to the altar each man brought some goodly offering,

A beechen cup brimming with milky foam,  
A fair cloth wrought with cunning imagery  
Of hounds in chase, a waxen honey-comb  
Dripping with oozy gold which scarce the bee  
Had ceased from building, a black skin of oil  
Meet for the wrestlers, a great boar the fierce and white-  
tusked spoil

Stolen from Artemis that jealous maid  
To please Athena, and the dappled hide  
Of a tall stag who in some mountain glade  
Had met the shaft ; and then the herald cried,  
And from the pillared precinct one by one  
Went the glad Greeks well pleased that they their simple  
vows had done.

And the old priest put out the waning fires  
Save that one lamp whose restless ruby glowed  
For ever in the cell, and the shrill lyres  
Came fainter on the wind, as down the road  
In joyous dance these country folk did pass,  
And with stout hands the warder closed the gates of  
polished brass.

Long time he lay and hardly dared to breathe,  
And heard the cadenced drip of spilt-out wine,  
And the rose-petals falling from the wreath  
As the night breezes wandered through the shrine,  
And seemed to be in some entranced swoon  
Till through the open roof above the full and brimming  
moon

Flooded with sheeny waves the marble floor,  
When from his nook upleapt the venturous lad,  
And flinging wide the cedar-carven door  
Beheld an awful image saffron-clad  
And armed for battle ! the gaunt Griffin glared  
From the huge helm, and the long lance of wreck and  
ruin flared



Like a red rod of flame, stony and steeled  
The Gorgon's head its leaden eyeballs rolled,  
And writhed its snaky horrors through the shield,  
And gaped aghast with bloodless lips and cold  
In passion impotent, while with blind gaze  
The blinking owl between the feet hooted in shrill  
amaze.

The lonely fisher as he trimmed his lamp  
Far out at sea off Sunium, or cast  
The net for tunnies, heard a brazen tramp  
Of horses smite the waves, and a wild blast  
Divide the folded curtains of the night,  
And knelt upon the little poop, and prayed in holy  
fright.

And guilty lovers in their venery  
Forgot a little while their stolen sweets,  
Deeming they heard dread Dian's bitter cry ;  
And the grim watchmen on their lofty seats  
Ran to their shields in haste precipitate,  
Or strained black-bearded throats across the dusky  
parapet.

For round the temple rolled the clang of arms,  
And the twelve Gods leapt up in marble fear,  
And the air quaked with dissonant alarms  
Till huge Poseidon shook his mighty spear,  
And on the frieze the prancing horses neighed,  
And the low tread of hurrying feet rang from the cavalcade.

Ready for death with parted lips he stood,  
And well content at such a price to see  
That calm wide brow, that terrible maidenhood,  
The marvel of that pitiless chastity,  
Ah ! well content indeed, for never wight  
Since Troy's young shepherd prince had seen so wonderful a sight.

Ready for death he stood, but lo ! the air  
Grew silent, and the horses ceased to neigh,  
And off his brow he tossed the clustering hair,  
And from his limbs he threw the cloak away,  
For whom would not such love make desperate,  
And nigher came, and touched her throat, and with hands  
violate

Undid the cuirass, and the crocus gown,  
And bared the breasts of polished ivory,  
Till from the waist the peplos falling down  
Left visible the secret mystery  
Which to no lover will Athena show,  
The grand cool flanks, the crescent thighs, the bossy hills  
of snow.

Those who have never known a lover's sin  
Let them not read my ditty, it will be  
To their dull ears so musicless and thin  
That they will have no joy of it, but ye  
To whose wan cheeks now creeps the lingering smile,  
Ye who have learned who Eros is, — O listen yet a-while.

A little space he let his greedy eyes  
Rest on the burnished image, till mere sight  
Half swooned for surfeit of such luxuries,  
And then his lips in hungering delight  
Fed on her lips, and round the towered neck  
He flung his arms, nor cared at all his passion's will to  
check.

Never I ween did lover hold such tryst,  
For all night long he murmured honeyed word,  
And saw her sweet unravished limbs, and kissed  
Her pale and argent body undisturbed,  
And paddled with the polished throat, and pressed  
His hot and beating heart upon her chill and icy breast.

It was as if Numidian javelins  
Pierced through and through his wild and whirling  
brain,  
And his nerves thrilled like throbbing violins  
In exquisite pulsation, and the pain  
Was such sweet anguish that he never drew  
His lips from hers till overhead the lark of warning flew.

They who have never seen the daylight peer  
Into a darkened room, and drawn the curtain,  
And with dull eyes and wearied from some dear  
And worshipped body risen, they for certain  
Will never know of what I try to sing,  
How long the last kiss was, how fond and late his linger-  
ing.

The moon was girdled with a crystal rim,  
The sign which shipmen say is ominous  
Of wrath in heaven, the wan stars were dim,  
And the low lightening east was tremulous  
With the faint fluttering wings of flying dawn,  
Ere from the silent sombre shrine this lover had with-  
drawn.

Down the steep rock with hurried feet and fast  
Clomb the brave lad, and reached the cave of Pan,  
And heard the goat-foot snoring as he passed,  
And leapt upon a grassy knoll and ran  
Like a young fawn unto an olive wood  
Which in a shady valley by the well-built city stood.

And sought a little stream, which well he knew,  
For oftentimes with boyish careless shout  
The green and crested grebe he would pursue,  
Or snare in woven net the silver trout,  
And down amid the startled reeds he lay  
Panting in breathless sweet affright, and waited for the  
day.

On the green bank he lay, and let one hand  
Dip in the cool dark eddies listlessly,  
And soon the breath of morning came and fanned  
His hot flushed cheeks, or lifted wantonly  
The tangled curls from off his forehead, while  
He on the running water gazed with strange and secret  
smile.

And soon the shepherd in rough woollen cloak  
With his long crook undid the wattled cotes,  
And from the stack a thin blue wreath of smoke  
Curled through the air across the ripening oats,  
And on the hill the yellow house-dog bayed  
As through the crisp and rustling fern the heavy cattle  
strayed.

And when the light-foot mower went afield  
Across the meadows laced with threaded dew,  
And the sheep bleated on the misty weald,  
And from its nest the waking corn-crake flew,  
Some woodmen saw him lying by the stream  
And marvelled much that any lad so beautiful could seem,

Nor deemed him born of mortals, and one said,

“It is young Hylas, that false runaway  
Who with a Naiad now would make his bed  
“Forgetting Herakles,” but others, “Nay,  
It is Narcissus, his own paramour,  
Those are the fond and crimson lips no woman can  
allure.”

And when they nearer came a third one cried,

“It is young Dionysos who has hid  
His spear and fawnskin by the river side  
Weary of hunting with the Bassarid,  
And wise indeed were we away to fly  
They live not long who on the gods immortal come to  
spy.”

So turned they back, and feared to look behind,

And told the timid swain how they had seen  
Amid the reeds some woodland God reclined,  
And no man dared to cross the open green,  
And on that day no olive-tree was slain,  
Nor rushes cut, but all deserted was the fair domain.

Save when the neat-herd's lad, his empty pail  
Well slung upon his back, with leap and bound  
Raced on the other side, and stopped to hail  
Hoping that he some comrade new had found,  
And gat no answer, and then half afraid  
Passed on his simple way, or down the still and silent  
glade

A little girl ran laughing from the farm  
Not thinking of love's secret mysteries,  
And when she saw the white and gleaming arm  
And all his manlihood, with longing eyes  
Whose passion mocked her sweet virginity  
Watched him a-while, and then stole back sadly and  
wearily.

Far off he heard the city's hum and noise,  
And now and then the shriller laughter where  
The passionate purity of brown-limbed boys  
Wrestled or raced in the clear healthful air,  
And now and then a little tinkling bell  
As the shorn wether led the sheep down to the mossy well.



Through the grey willows danced the fretful gnat,  
The grasshopper chirped idly from the tree,  
In sleek and oily coat the water-rat  
Breasting the little ripples manfully  
Made for the wild-duck's nest, from bough to bough  
Hopped the shy finch, and the huge tortoise crept across  
the slough.

On the faint wind floated the silky seeds,  
As the bright scythe swept through the waving grass,  
The ousel-cock splashed circles in the reeds  
And flecked with silver whorls the forest's glass,  
Which scarce had caught again its imagery  
Ere from its bed the dusky tench leapt at the dragon-  
fly.

But little care had he for any thing  
Though up and down the beech the squirrel played,  
And from the copse the linnet 'gan to sing  
To her brown mate her sweetest serenade,  
Ah! little care indeed, for he had seen  
The breasts of Pallas and the naked wonder of the  
Queen.

But when the herdsman called his straggling goats

With whistling pipe across the rocky road,  
And the shard-beetle with its trumpet-notes

Boomed through the darkening woods, and seemed to  
bode

Of coming storm, and the belated crane

Passed homeward like a shadow, and the dull big drops  
of rain

Fell on the pattering fig-leaves, up he rose,

And from the gloomy forest went his way  
Past sombre homestead and wet orchard-close,

And came at last unto a little quây,  
And called his mates a-board, and took his seat  
On the high poop, and pushed from land, and loosed the  
dripping sheet,

And steered across the bay, and when nine suns

Passed down the long and laddered way of gold,  
And nine pale moons had breathed their orisons

To the chaste stars their confessors, or told  
Their dearest secret to the downy moth

That will not fly at noonday, through the foam and surging  
froth

Came a great owl with yellow sulphurous eyes  
And lit upon the ship, whose timbers creaked  
As though the lading of three argosies  
Were in the hold, and flapped its wings, and shrieked,  
And darkness straightway stole across the deep,  
Sheathed was Orion's sword, dread Mars himself fled down  
the steep,

And the moon hid behind a tawny mask  
Of drifting cloud, and from the ocean's marge  
Rose the red plume, the huge and hornèd casque,  
The seven-cubit spear, the brazen targe !  
And clad in bright and burnished panoply  
Athena strode across the stretch of sick and shivering  
sea !

To the dull sailors' sight her loosened locks  
Seemed like the jagged storm-rack, and her feet  
Only the spume that floats on hidden rocks,  
And marking how the rising waters beat  
Against the rolling ship, the pilot cried  
To the young helmsman at the stern to luff to windward  
side.

But he, the over-bold adulterer,

A dear profaner of great mysteries,

An ardent amorous idolater,

When he beheld those grand relentless eyes

Laughed loud for joy, and crying out "I come"

Leapt from the lofty poop into the chill and churning  
foam.

Then fell from the high heaven one bright star,

One dancer left the circling galaxy,

And back to Athens on her clattering car

In all the pride of venged divinity

Pale Pallas swept with shrill and steely clank,

And a few gurgling bubbles rose where her boy lover  
sank.

And the mast shuddered as the gaunt owl flew

With mocking hoots after the wrathful Queen,

And the old pilot bade the trembling crew

Hoist the big sail, and told how he had seen

Close to the stern a dim and giant form,

And like a dipping swallow the stout ship dashed through  
the storm.

And no man dared to speak of Charmides

Deeming that he some evil thing had wrought,

And when they reached the strait Symplegades

They beached their galley on the shore, and sought

The toll-gate of the city hastily,

And in the market showed their brown and pictured  
pottery.

## II.

But some good Triton-god had ruth, and bare  
The boy's drowned body back to Grecian land,  
And mermaids combed his dank and dripping hair  
And smoothed his brow, and loosed his clenching hand,  
Some brought sweet spices from far Araby,  
And others bade the halcyon sing her softest lullaby.

And when he neared his old Athenian home,  
A mighty billow rose up suddenly  
Upon whose oily back the clotted foam  
Lay diapered in some strange fantasy,  
And clasping him unto its glassy breast,  
Swept landward, like a white-maned steed upon a ven-  
turous quest !

Now where Colonos leans unto the sea

There lies a long and level stretch of lawn,  
The rabbit knows it, and the mountain bee

For it deserts Hymettus, and the Faun  
Is not afraid, for never through the day  
Comes a cry ruder than the shout of shepherd lads at  
play.

But often from the thorny labyrinth

And tangled branches of the circling wood  
The stealthy hunter sees young Hyacinth

Hurling the polished disk, and draws his hood  
Over his guilty gaze, and creeps away,  
Nor dares to wind his horn, or— else at the first break  
of day

The Dryads come and throw the leathern ball

Along the reedy shore, and circumvent  
Some goat-eared Pan to be their seneschal

For fear of bold Poseidon's ravishment,  
And loose their girdles, with shy timorous eyes,  
Lest from the surf his azure arms and purple beard should  
rise.

On this side and on that a rocky cave,  
Hung with the yellow-bell'd laburnum, stands,  
Smooth is the beach, save where some ebbing wave  
Leaves its faint outline etched upon the sands,  
As though it feared to be too soon forgot  
By the green rush, its playfellow, — and yet, it is a spot

So small, that the inconstant butterfly  
Could steal the hoarded honey from each flower  
Ere it was noon, and still not satisfy  
Its over-greedy love, — within an hour  
A sailor boy, were he but rude enow  
To land and pluck a garland for his galley's painted  
prow,

Would almost leave the little meadow bare,  
For it knows nothing of great pageantry,  
Only a few narcissi here and there  
Stand separate in sweet austerity,  
Dotting the unmown grass with silver stars,  
And here and there a daffodil waves tiny scimetars.



Hither the billow brought him, and was glad  
Of such dear servitude, and where the land  
Was virgin of all waters laid the lad  
Upon the golden margent of the strand,  
And like a lingering lover oft returned  
To kiss those pallid limbs which once with intense fire  
burned,

Ere the wet seas had quenched that holocaust,  
That self-fed flame, that passionate lustihead,  
Ere grisly death with chill and nipping frost  
Had withered up those lilies white and red  
Which, while the boy would through the forest range,  
Answered each other in a sweet antiphonal counter-  
change.

And when at dawn the woodnymphs, hand-in-hand,  
Threaded the bosky dell, their satyr spied  
The boy's pale body stretched upon the sand,  
And feared Poseidon's treachery, and cried,  
And like bright sunbeams flitting through a glade,  
Each startled Dryad sought some safe and leafy am-  
buscade.

Save one white girl, who deemed it would not be  
So dread a thing to feel a sea-god's arms  
Crushing her breasts in amorous tyranny,  
And longed to listen to those subtle charms  
Insidious lovers weave when they would win  
Some fencèd fortress, and stole back again, nor thought  
it sin

To yield her treasure unto one so fair,  
And lay beside him, thirsty with love's drouth,  
Called him soft names, played with his tangled hair,  
And with hot lips made havoc of his mouth  
Afraid he might not wake, and then afraid  
Lest he might wake too soon, fled back, and then, fond  
renegade,

Returned to fresh assault, and all day long  
Sat at his side, and laughed at her new toy,  
And held his hand, and sang her sweetest song,  
Then frowned to see how froward was the boy  
Who would not with her maidenhood entwine,  
Nor knew that three days since his eyes had looked on  
Proserpine,

Nor knew what sacrilege his lips had done,  
But said, "He will awake, I know him well,  
He will awake at evening when the sun  
Hangs his red shield on Corinth's citadel,  
This sleep is but a cruel treachery  
To make me love him more, and in some cavern of the  
sea

Deeper than ever falls the fisher's line  
Already a huge Triton blows his horn,  
And weaves a garland from the crystalline  
And drifting ocean-tendrils to adorn  
The emerald pillars of our bridal bed,  
For sphered in foaming silver, and with coral-crownèd  
head,

We two will sit upon a throne of pearl,  
And a blue wave will be our canopy,  
And at our feet the water-snakes will curl  
In all their amethystine panoply  
Of diamonded mail, and we will mark  
The mullets swimming by the mast of some storm-  
foundered bark,

Vermilion-finned with eyes of bossy gold

Like flakes of crimson light, and the great deep  
His glassy-portaled chamber will unfold,

And we will see the painted dolphins sleep  
Cradled by murmuring halcyons on the rocks  
Where Proteus in quaint suit of green pastures his mon-  
strous flocks.

And tremulous opal-hued anemones

Will wave their purple fringes where we tread  
Upon the mirrored floor, and argosies

Of fishes flecked with tawny scales will thread  
The drifting cordage of the shattered wreck,  
And honey-coloured amber beads our twining limbs will  
deck."

But when that baffled Lord of War the Sun

With gaudy pennon flying passed away  
Into his brazen House, and one by one

The little yellow stars began to stray  
Across the field of heaven, ah ! then indeed  
She feared his lips upon her lips would never care to  
feed,

And cried, "Awake, already the pale moon  
Washes the trees with silver, and the wave  
Creeps grey and chilly up this sandy dune,  
The croaking frogs are out, and from the cave  
The night-jar shrieks, the fluttering bats repass,  
And the brown stoat with hollow flanks creeps through  
the dusky grass.

Nay, though thou art a God, be not so coy,  
For in yon stream there is a little reed  
That often whispers how a lovely boy  
Lay with her once upon a grassy mead,  
Who when his cruel pleasure he had done  
Spread wings of rustling gold and soared aloft into the  
sun.

Be not so coy, the laurel trembles still  
With great Apollo's kisses, and the fir  
Whose clustering sisters fringe the sea-ward hill  
Hath many a tale of that bold ravisher  
Whom men call Boreas, and I have seen  
The mocking eyes of Hermes through the poplar's silvery  
sheen.

Even the jealous Naiads call me fair,  
And every morn a young and ruddy swain  
Wooes me with applēs and with locks of hair,  
And seeks to soothe my virginal disdain  
By all the gifts the gentle wood-nymphs love ;  
But yesterday he brought to me an iris-plumaged dove

With little crimson feet, which with its store  
Of seven spotted eggs the cruel lad  
Had stolen from the lofty sycamore  
At day-break, when her amorous comrade had  
Flown off in search of berried juniper  
Which most they love ; the fretful wasp, that earliest  
vintager

Of the blue grapes, hath not persistency  
So constant as this simple shepherd-boy  
For my poor lips, his joyous purity  
And laughing sunny eyes might well decoy  
A Dryad from her oath to Artemis ;  
For very beautiful is he, his mouth was made to kiss,

His argent forehead, like a rising moon  
Over the dusky hills of meeting brows,  
Is crescent shaped, the hot and Tyrian noon  
Leads from the myrtle-grove no goodlier spouse  
For Cytheræa, the first silky down  
Fringes his blushing cheeks, and his young limbs are  
strong and brown :

And he is rich, and fat and fleecy herds  
Of bleating sheep upon his meadows lie,  
And many an earthen bowl of yellow curds  
Is in his homestead for the thievish fly  
To swim and drown in, the pink clover mead  
Keeps its sweet store for him, and he can pipe on oaten  
reed.

And yet I love him not, it was for thee  
I kept my love, I knew that thou would'st come  
To rid me of this pallid chastity ;  
Thou fairest flower of the flowerless foam  
Of all the wide Ægean, brightest star  
Of ocean's azure heavens where the mirrored planets  
are !

I knew that thou would'st come, for when at first  
The dry wood burgeoned, and the sap of Spring  
Swelled in my green and tender bark or burst  
To myriad multitudinous blossoming  
Which mocked the midnight with its mimic moons  
That did not dread the dawn, and first the thrushes' rap-  
turous tunes

Startled the squirrel from its granary,  
And cuckoo flowers fringed the narrow lane,  
Through my young leaves a sensuous ecstasy  
Crept like new wine, and every mossy vein  
Throbbled with the fitful pulse of amorous blood,  
And the wild winds of passion shook my slim stem's  
maidenhood.

The trooping fawns at evening came and laid  
Their cool black noses on my lowest boughs  
And on my topmost branch the blackbird made  
A little nest of grasses for his spouse,  
And now and then a twittering wren would light  
On a thin twig which hardly bare the weight of such  
delight.



I was the Attic shepherd's trysting place,  
    Beneath my shadow Amaryllis lay,  
And round my trunk would laughing Daphnis chase  
    The timorous girl, till tired out with play  
She felt his hot breath stir her tangled hair,  
And turned, and looked, and fled no more from such  
    delightful snare.

Then come away unto my ambushade  
    Where clustering woodbine weaves a canopy  
For amorous pleasaunce, and the rustling shade  
    Of Paphian myrtles seems to sanctify  
The dearest rites of love, there in the cool  
And green recesses of its farthest depth there is a pool,

The ouzel's haunt, the wild bee's pasturage,  
    For round its rim great creamy lilies float  
Through their flat leaves in verdant anchorage,  
    Each cup a white-sailed golden-laden boat  
Steered by a dragon-fly, — be not afraid  
To leave this wan and wave-kissed shore, surely the place  
    were made

For lovers such as we, the Cyprian Queen,  
One arm around her boyish paramour,  
Strays often there at eve, and I have seen  
The moon strip off her misty vestiture  
For young Endymion's eyes, be not afraid,  
The panther feet of Dian never tread that secret glade.

Nay if thou wil'st, back to the beating brine,  
Back to the boisterous billow let us go,  
And walk all day beneath the hyaline  
Huge vault of Neptune's watery portico,  
And watch the purple monsters of the deep  
Sport in ungainly play, and from his lair keen Xiphias  
leap.

For if my mistress find me lying here  
She will not ruth or gentle pity show,  
But lay her boar-spear down, and with austere  
Relentless fingers string the cornel bow,  
And draw the feathered notch against her breast,  
And loose the archèd cord, ay, even now upon the quest

I hear her hurrying feet, — awake, awake,  
Thou laggard in love's battle ! once at least  
Let me drink deep of passion's wine, and slake  
My parchèd being with the nectarous feast  
Which even Gods affect ! O come Love come,  
Still we have time to reach the cavern of thine azure  
home."

Scarce had she spoken when the shuddering trees  
Shook, and the leaves divided, and the air  
Grew conscious of a God, and the grey seas  
Crawled backward, and a long and dismal blare  
Blew from some tasselled horn, a sleuth-hound bayed,  
And like a flame a barbèd reed flew whizzing down the  
glade.

And where the little flowers of her breast  
Just brake into their milky blossoming,  
This murderous paramour, this unbidden guest,  
Pierced and struck deep in horrid chambering,  
And ploughed a bloody furrow with its dart,  
And dug a long red road, and cleft with wingèd death  
her heart.

Sobbing her life out with a bitter cry  
    On the boy's body fell the Dryad maid,  
Sobbing for incomplete virginity,  
    And raptures unenjoyed, and pleasures dead,  
And all the pain of things unsatisfied,  
And the bright drops of crimson youth crept down her  
    throbbing side.

Ah ! pitiful it was to hear her moan,  
    And very pitiful to see her die  
Ere she had yielded up her sweets, or known  
    The joy of passion, that dread mystery  
Which not to know is not to live at all,  
And yet to know is to be held in death's most deadly  
    thrall.

But as it hapt the Queen of Cythere,  
    Who with Adonis all night long had lain  
Within some shepherd's hut in Arcady,  
    On team of silver doves and gilded wane  
Was journeying Paphos-ward, high up afar  
From mortal ken between the mountains and the morn-  
    ing star,

And when low down she spied the hapless pair,  
And heard the Oread's faint despairing cry,  
Whose cadence seemed to play upon the air  
As though it were a viol, hastily  
She bade her pigeons fold each straining plume,  
And dropt to earth, and reached the strand, and saw  
their dolorous doom.

For as a gardener turning back his head  
To catch the last notes of the linnet, mows  
With careless scythe too near some flower bed,  
And cuts the thorny pillar of the rose,  
And with the flower's loosened loveliness  
Strews the brown mould, or as some shepherd lad in  
wantonness

Driving his little flock along the mead  
Treads down two daffodils which side by side  
Have lured the lady-bird with yellow brede  
And made the gaudy moth forget its pride,  
Treads down their brimming golden chalices  
Under light feet which were not made for such rude  
ravages,

Or as a schoolboy tired of his book  
Flings himself down upon the reedy grass  
And plucks two water-lilies from the brook,  
And for a time forgets the hour glass,  
Then wearies of their sweets, and goes his way,  
And lets the hot sun kill them, even so these lovers  
lay.

And Venus cried, " It is dread Artemis  
Whose bitter hand hath wrought this cruelty,  
Or else that mightier may whose care it is  
To guard her strong and stainless majesty  
Upon the hill Athenian, — alas !  
That they who loved so well unloved into Death's house  
should pass.

So with soft hands she laid the boy and girl  
In the great golden waggon tenderly,  
Her white throat whiter than a moony pearl  
Just threaded with a blue vein's tapestry  
Had not yet ceased to throb, and still her breast  
Swayed like a wind-stirred lily in ambiguous unrest.

And then each pigeon spread its milky van,  
The bright car soared into the dawning sky,  
And like a cloud the aerial caravan  
Passed over the Ægean silently,  
Till the faint air was troubled with the song  
From the wan mouths that call on bleeding Thammuz all  
night long.

But when the doves had reached their wonted goal  
Where the wide stair of orbèd marble dips  
Its snows into the sea, her fluttering soul  
Just shook the trembling petals of her lips  
And passed into the void, and Venus knew  
That one fair maid the less would walk amid her retinue,

And bade her servants carve a cedar chest  
With all the wonder of this history,  
Within whose scented womb their limbs should rest  
Where olive-trees make tender the blue sky  
On the low hills of Paphos, and the faun  
Pipes in the noonday, and the nightingale sings on till  
dawn.

Nor failed they to obey her hest, and ere  
    The morning bee had stung the daffodil  
With tiny fretful spear, or from its lair  
    The waking stag had leapt across the rill  
And roused the ouzel, or the lizard crept  
Athwart the sunny rock, beneath the grass their bodies  
    slept:

And when day brake, within that silver shrine  
    Fed by the flames of cressets tremulous,  
Queen Venus knelt and prayed to Proserpine  
    That she whose beauty made Death amorous  
Should beg a guerdon from her pallid Lord,  
And let Desire pass across dread Charon's icy ford.



## III.

In melancholy moonless Acheron,  
Far from the goodly earth and joyous day,  
Where no spring ever buds, nor ripening sun  
Weighs down the apple trees, nor flowery May  
Chequers with chestnut blooms the grassy floor,  
Where thrushes never sing, and piping linnets ~~mate~~ no  
more,

There by a dim and dark Lethæan well  
Young Charmides was lying, wearily  
He plucked the blossoms from the asphodel,  
And with its little rifled treasury  
Strewed the dull waters of the dusky stream,  
And watched the white stars founder, and the land was  
like a dream,

When as he gazed into the watery glass  
And through his brown hair's curly tangles scanned  
His own wan face, a shadow seemed to pass  
Across the mirror, and a little hand  
Stole into his, and warm lips timidly  
Brushed his pale cheeks, and breathed their secret forth  
into a sigh.

Then turned he round his weary eyes and saw,  
And ever nigher still their faces came,  
And nigher ever did their young mouths draw  
Until they seemed one perfect rose of flame,  
And longing arms around her neck he cast,  
And felt her throbbing bosom, and his breath came hot  
and fast,

And all his hoarded sweets were hers to kiss,  
And all her maidenhood was his to slay,  
And limb to limb in long and rapturous bliss  
Their passion waxed and waned, — O why essay  
To pipe again of love too venturous reed !  
Enough, enough that Erôs laughed upon that flowerless  
mead.

Too venturous poesy O why essay  
To pipe again of passion ! fold thy wings  
O'er daring Icarus and bid thy lay  
Sleep hidden in the lyre's silent strings,  
Till thou hast found the old Castalian rill,  
Or from the Lesbian waters plucked drowned Sappho's  
golden quill !

Enough, enough that he whose life had been  
A fiery pulse of sin, a splendid shame,  
Could in the loveless land of Hades glean  
One scorching harvest from those fields of flame  
Where passion walks with naked unshod feet  
And is not wounded, — ah ! enough that once their lips  
could meet

In that wild throb when all existences  
Seem narrowed to one single ecstasy  
Which dies through its own sweetness and the stress  
Of too much pleasure, ere Persephone  
Had bade them serve her by the ebon throne  
Of the pale God who in the fields of Enna loosed her zone.



## IMPRESSIONS.

## I.

## LES SILHOUETTES.

THE sea is flecked with bars of grey  
The dull dead wind is out of tune,  
And like a withered leaf the moon  
Is blown across the stormy bay.

Etched clear upon the pallid sand  
The black boat lies : a sailor boy  
Clambers aboard in careless joy  
With laughing face and gleaming hand.

And overhead the curlews cry,  
Where through the dusky upland grass  
The young brown-throated reapers pass,  
Like silhouettes against the sky.

## II.

## LA FUITE DE LA LUNE.

To outer senses there is peace,  
A dreamy peace on either hand,  
Deep silence in the shadowy land,  
Deep silence where the shadows cease.

Save for a cry that echoes shrill  
From some lone bird disconsolate ;  
A corncrake calling to its mate ;  
The answer from the misty hill.

And suddenly the moon withdraws  
Her sickle from the lightening skies,  
And to her sombre cavern flies,  
Wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze.

## THE GRAVE OF KEATS.

RID of the world's injustice, and his pain,  
 He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue :  
 Taken from life when life and love were new  
 The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,  
 Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.  
 No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew,  
 But gentle violets weeping with the dew  
 Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain.  
 O proudest heart that broke for misery !  
 O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene !  
 O poet-painter of our English Land !  
 Thy name was writ in water —— it shall stand :  
 And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,  
 As Isabella did her Basil-tree.

ROME.

## THEOCRITUS.

## A VILLANELLE.

O SINGER of Persephone !

In the dim meadows desolate  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still through the ivy flits the bee

Where Amaryllis lies in state ;  
O Singer of Persephone !

Simætha calls on Hecate

And hears the wild dogs at the gate ;  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still by the light and laughing sea

Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate :  
O Singer of Persephone !



And still in boyish rivalry

Young Daphnis challenges his mate :  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee,

For thee the jocund shepherds wait,  
O Singer of Persephone !  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

## IN THE GOLD ROOM.

## A HARMONY.

HER ivory hands on the ivory keys  
Strayed in a fitful fantasy,  
Like the silver gleam when the poplar trees  
Rustle their pale leaves listlessly,  
Or the drifting foam of a restless sea  
When the waves show their teeth in the flying breeze.

Her gold hair fell on the wall of gold  
Like the delicate gossamer tangles spun  
On the burnished disk of the marigold,  
Or the sun-flower turning to meet the sun  
When the gloom of the jealous night is done,  
And the spear of the lily is aureoled.

And her sweet red lips on these lips of mine  
    Burned like the ruby fire set  
In the swinging lamp of a crimson shrine,  
    Or the bleeding wounds of the pomegranate,  
    Or the heart of the lotus drenched and wet  
With the spilt-out blood of the rose-red wine.

## BALLADE DE MARGUERITE.

(NORMANDE.)

I AM weary of lying within the chase  
When the knights are meeting in market-place.

Nay, go not thou to the red-roofed town  
Lest the hooves of the war-horse tread thee down.

But I would not go where the Squires ride,  
I would only walk by my Lady's side.

Alack ! and alack ! thou art over bold,  
A Forester's son may not eat off gold.

Will she love me the less that my Father is seen,  
Each Martinmas day in a doublet green ?

Perchance she is sewing at tapestry,  
Spindle and loom are not meet for thee.

Ah, if she is working the arras bright  
I might ravel the threads by the fire-light.

Perchance she is hunting of the deer,  
How could you follow o'er hill and meer?

Ah, if she is riding with the court,  
I might run beside her and wind the morte.

Perchance she is kneeling in S. Denys,  
(On her soul may our Lady have gramercy !)

Ah, if she is praying in lone chapelle,  
I might swing the censer and ring the bell.

Come in my son, for you look sae pale,  
The father shall fill thee a stoup of ale.

But who are these knights in bright array?  
Is it a pageant the rich folks play?

'Tis the King of England from over sea,  
Who has come unto visit our fair countrie.

But why does the curfew toll sae low  
And why do the mourners walk a-row?

O 'tis Hugh of Amiens my sister's son  
Who is lying stark, for his day is done.

Nay, nay, for I see white lilies clear,  
It is no strong man who lies on the bier.

O 'tis old Dame Jeannette that kept the hall,  
I knew she would die at the autumn fall.

Dame Jeannette had not that gold-brown hair,  
Old Jeannette was not a maiden fair.

O 'tis none of our kith and none of our kin,  
(Her soul may our Lady assoil from sin !)

But I hear the boy's voice chaunting sweet,  
"Elle est morte, la Marguerite."

Come in my son and lie on the bed,  
And let the dead folk bury their dead.

O mother, you know I loved her true :  
O mother, hath one grave room for two ?

## THE DOLE OF THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

(BRETON.)

SEVEN stars in the still water,  
And seven in the sky ;  
Seven sins on the King's daughter,  
Deep in her soul to lie.

Red roses are at her feet,  
(Roses are red in her red-gold hair)  
And O where her bosom and girdle meet  
Red roses are hidden there.

Fair is the knight who lieth slain  
Amid the rush and reed,  
See the lean fishes that are fain  
Upon dead men to feed.

Sweet is the page that lieth there,  
    (Cloth of gold is goodly prey,)  
See the black ravens in the air,  
    Black, O black as the night are they.

What do they there so stark and dead?  
    (There is blood upon her hand)  
Why are the lilies flecked with red?  
    (There is blood on the river sand.)

There are two that ride from the south and east,  
    And two from the north and west,  
For the black raven a goodly feast,  
    For the King's daughter rest.

There is one man who loves her true,  
    (Red, O red, is the stain of gore !)  
He hath duggen a grave by the darksome yew,  
    (One grave will do for four.)

No moon in the still heaven,  
    In the black water none,  
The sins on her soul are seven,  
    The sin upon his is one.



## AMOR INTELLECTUALIS.

Oft have we trod the vales of Castaly  
 And heard sweet notes of sylvan music blown  
 From antique reeds to common folk unknown :  
 And often launched our bark upon that sea  
 Which the nine Muses hold in empery,  
 And ploughed free furrows through the wave and foam,  
 Nor spread reluctant sail for more safe home  
 Till we had freighted well our argosy.  
 Of which despoiled treasures these remain,  
 Sordello's passion, and the honied line  
 Of young Endymion, lordly Tamburlaine  
 Driving his pampered jades, and more than these,  
 The seven-fold vision of the Florentine,  
 And grave-browed Milton's solemn harmonies.

## SANTA DECCA.

THE Gods are dead : no longer do we bring  
     To grey-eyed Pallas crowns of olive-leaves !  
     Demeter's child no more hath tithe of sheaves,  
 And in the noon the careless shepherds sing,  
 For Pan is dead, and all the wantoning  
     By secret glade and devious haunt is o'er :  
     Young Hylas seeks the water-springs no more ;  
 Great Pan is dead, and Mary's Son is King.

And yet — perchance in this sea-trancèd isle,  
     Chewing the bitter fruit of memory,  
     Some God lies hidden in the asphodel.  
 Ah Love ! if such there be then it were well  
     For us to fly his anger : nay, but see  
     The leaves are stirring : let us watch a-while.

## A VISION.

Two crownèd Kings, and One that stood alone  
With no green weight of laurels round his head,  
But with sad eyes as one uncomforted,  
And wearied with man's never-ceasing moan  
For sins no bleating victim can atone,  
And sweet long lips with tears and kisses fed.  
Girt was he in a garment black and red,  
And at his feet I marked a broken stone  
Which sent up lilies, dove-like, to his knees.  
Now at their sight, my heart being lit with flame  
I cried to Beatricé, "Who are these?"  
And she made answer, knowing well each name,  
"Æschylos first, the second Sophokles,  
And last (wide stream of tears !) Euripides."

## IMPRESSION DU VOYAGE.

THE sea was sapphire coloured, and the sky  
Burned like a heated opal through the air,  
We hoisted sail ; the wind was blowing fair  
For the blue lands that to the eastward lie.  
From the steep prow I marked with quickening eye  
Zakynthos, every olive grove and creek,  
Ithaca's cliff, Lycaon's snowy peak,  
And all the flower-strewn hills of Arcady.  
The flapping of the sail against the mast,  
The ripple of the water on the side,  
The ripple of girls' laughter at the stern,  
The only sounds : — when 'gan the West to burn,  
And a red sun upon the seas to ride,  
I stood upon the soil of Greece at last !

## THE GRAVE OF SHELLEY.

LIKE burnt-out torches by a sick man's bed  
Gaunt cypress-trees stand round the sun-bleached stone ;  
Here doth the little night-owl make her throne,  
And the slight lizard show his jewelled head.  
And, where the chaliced poppies flame to red,  
In the still chamber of yon pyramid  
Surely some Old-World Sphinx lurks darkly hid,  
Grim warder of this pleasaunce of the dead.

Ah ! sweet indeed to rest within the womb  
Of Earth, great mother of eternal sleep,  
But sweeter far for thee a restless tomb  
In the blue cavern of an echoing deep,  
Or where the tall ships founder in the gloom  
Against the rocks of some wave-shattered steep.

ROME.

## BY THE ARNO.

THE oleander on the wall  
Grows crimson in the dawning light,  
Though the grey shadows of the night  
Lie yet on Florence like a pall.

The dew is bright upon the hill,  
And bright the blossoms overhead,  
But ah ! the grasshoppers have fled,  
The little Attic song is still.

Only the leaves are gently stirred  
By the soft breathing of the gale,  
And in the almond-scented vale  
The lonely nightingale is heard.

The day will make thee silent soon,  
O nightingale sing on for love !  
While yet upon the shadowy grove  
Splinter the arrows of the moon.

Before across the silent lawn  
In sea-green mist the morning steals,  
And to love's frightened eyes reveals  
The long white fingers of the dawn

Fast climbing up the eastern sky  
To grasp and slay the shuddering night,  
All careless of my heart's delight,  
Or if the nightingale should die.





IMPRESSIONS DU THÉÂTRE.



FABIEN DEI FRANCHI.

THE silent room, the heavy creeping shade,  
The dead that travel fast, the opening door,  
The murdered brother rising through the floor,  
The ghost's white fingers on thy shoulders laid,  
And then the lonely duel in the glade,  
The broken swords, the stifled scream, the gore,  
Thy grand revengeful eyes when all is o'er, —  
These things are well enough, — but thou wert made  
For more august creation ! frenzied Lear  
Should at thy bidding wander on the heath  
With the shrill fool to mock him, Romeo  
For thee should lure his love, and desperate fear  
Pluck Richard's recreant dagger from its sheath —  
Thou trumpet set for Shakespeare's lips to blow !

## PHÈDRE.

How vain and dull this common world must seem  
To such a One as thou, who should'st have talked  
At Florence with Mirandola, or walked  
Through the cool olives of the Academe :  
Thou should'st have gathered reeds from a green stream  
For Goat-foot Pan's shrill piping, and have played  
With the white girls in that Phæacian glade  
Where grave Odysseus wakened from his dream.

Ah ! surely once some urn of Attic clay  
Held thy wan dust, and thou hast come again  
Back to this common world so dull and vain,  
For thou wert weary of the sunless day,  
The heavy fields of scentless asphodel,  
The loveless lips with which men kiss in Hell.

## PORTIA.

I MARVEL not Bassanio was so bold  
To peril all he had upon the lead,  
Or that proud Aragon bent low his head,  
Or that Morocco's fiery heart grew cold :  
For in that gorgeous dress of beaten gold  
Which is more golden than the golden sun,  
No woman Veronesé looked upon  
Was half so fair as thou whom I behold.  
Yet fairer when with wisdom as your shield  
The sober-suited lawyer's gown you donned  
And would not let the laws of Venice yield  
Antonio's heart to that accursèd Jew —  
O Portia ! take my heart : it is thy due :  
I think I will not quarrel with the Bond.

## QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA.

IN the lone tent, waiting for victory,  
She stands with eyes marred by the mists of pain,  
Like some wan lily overdrenched with rain :  
The clamorous clang of arms, the ensanguined sky,  
War's ruin, and the wreck of chivalry,  
To her proud soul no common fear can bring :  
Bravely she tarrieth for her Lord the King,  
Her soul a-flame with passionate ecstasy.  
O Hair of Gold ! O Crimson Lips ! O Face  
Made for the luring and the love of man !  
With thee I do forget the toil and stress,  
The loveless road that knows no resting place,  
Time's straitened pulse, the soul's dread weariness,  
My freedom and my life republican !

## CAMMA.

As one who poring on a Grecian urn  
Scans the fair shapes some Attic hand hath made,  
God with slim goddess, goodly man with maid,  
And for their beauty's sake is loth to turn  
And face the obvious day, must I not yearn  
For many a secret moon of indolent bliss,  
When in the midmost shrine of Artemis  
I see thee standing, antique-limbed, and stern?

And yet — methinks I'd rather see thee play  
That serpent of old Nile, whose witchery  
Made Emperors drunken, — come, great Egypt, shake  
Our stage with all thy mimic pageants ! Nay,  
I am grown sick of unreal passions, make  
The world thine Actium, me thine Antony !





PANTHEA.



NAY, let us walk from fire unto fire,  
From passionate pain to deadlier delight, —  
I am too young to live without desire,  
Too young art thou to waste this summer night  
Asking those idle questions which of old  
Man sought of seer and oracle, and no reply was told.

For, sweet, to feel is better than to know,  
And wisdom is a childless heritage,  
One pulse of passion — youth's first fiery glow, —  
Are worth the hoarded proverbs of the sage :  
Vex not thy soul with dead philosophy,  
Have we not lips to kiss with, hearts to love, and eyes to  
see !

Dost thou not hear the murmuring nightingale

Like water bubbling from a silver jar,

So soft she sings the envious moon is pale,

That high in heaven she is hung so far

She cannot hear that love-enraptured tune, —

Mark how she wreathes each horn with mist, yon late and  
labouring moon.

White lilies, in whose cups the gold bees dream,

The fallen snow of petals where the breeze

Scatters the chestnut blossom, or the gleam

Of boyish limbs in water, — are not these

Enough for thee, dost thou desire more?

Alas! the Gods will give nought else from their eternal  
store.

For our high Gods have sick and wearied grown

Of all our endless sins, our vain endeavour

For wasted days of youth to make atone

By pain or prayer or priest, and never, never,

Hearken they now to either good or ill,

But send their rain upon the just and the unjust at  
will.

They sit at ease, our Gods they sit at ease,  
    Strewing with leaves of rose their scented wine,  
They sleep, they sleep, beneath the rocking trees  
    Where asphodel and yellow lotus twine,  
Mourning the old glad days before they knew  
What evil things the heart of man could dream, and  
    dreaming do.

And far beneath the brazen floor they see  
    Like swarming flies the crowd of little men,  
The bustle of small lives, then wearily  
    Back to their lotus-haunts they turn again  
Kissing each other's mouths, and mix more deep  
The poppy-seeded draught which brings soft purple-lidded  
    sleep.

There all day long the golden-vestured sun,  
    Their torch-bearer, stands with his torch a-blaze,  
And when the gaudy web of noon is spun  
    By its twelve maidens through the crimson haze  
Fresh from Endymion's arms comes forth the moon,  
And the immortal Gods in toils of mortal passions swoon.

There walks Queen Juno through some dewy mead  
Her grand white feet flecked with the saffron dust  
Of wind-stirred lilies, while young Ganymede  
Leaps in the hot and amber-foaming must,  
His curls all tossed, as when the eagle bare  
The frightened boy from Ida through the blue Ionian  
air.

There in the green heart of some garden close  
Queen Venus with the shepherd at her side,  
Her warm soft body like the briar rose  
Which would be white yet blushes at its pride,  
Laughs low for love, till jealous Salmacis  
Peers through the myrtle-leaves and sighs for pain of  
lonely bliss.

There never does that dreary north-wind blow  
Which leaves our English forests bleak and bare,  
Nor ever falls the swift white-feathered snow,  
Nor doth the red-toothed lightning ever dare  
To wake them in the silver-fretted night  
When we lie weeping for some sweet sad sin, some dead  
delight.

Alas ! they know the far Lethæan spring,  
The violet-hidden waters well they know,  
Where one whose feet with tired wandering  
Are faint and broken may take heart and go,  
And from those dark depths cool and crystalline  
Drink, and draw balm, and sleep for sleepless souls, and  
anodyne.

But we oppress our natures, God or Fate  
Is our enemy, we starve and feed  
On vain repentance — O we are born too late !  
What balm for us in bruised poppy seed  
Who crowd into one finite pulse of time  
The joy of infinite love and the fierce pain of infinite  
crime.

O we are wearied of this sense of guilt,  
Wearied of pleasure's paramour despair,  
Wearied of every temple we have built,  
Wearied of every right, unanswered prayer,  
For man is weak ; God sleeps : and heaven is high :  
One fiery-coloured moment : one great love ; and lo !  
we die.

Ah ! but no ferry-man with labouring pole  
Nears his black shallop to the flowerless strand,  
No little coin of bronze can bring the soul  
Over Death's river to the sunless land,  
Victim and wine and vow are all in vain,  
The tomb is sealed ; the soldiers watch ; the dead rise  
not again.

We are resolved into the supreme air,  
We are made one with what we touch and see,  
With our heart's blood each crimson sun is fair,  
With our young lives each spring-impassioned tree  
Flames into green, the wildest beasts that range  
The moor our kinsmen are, all life is one, and all is  
change.

With beat of systole and of diastole  
One grand great life throbs through earth's giant heart,  
And mighty waves of single Being roll  
From nerve-less germ to man, for we are part  
Of every rock and bird and beast and hill,  
One with the things that prey on us, and one with what  
we kill.



From lower cells of waking life we pass  
To full perfection ; thus the world grows old :  
We who are godlike now were once a mass  
Of quivering purple flecked with bars of gold,  
Unsentient or of joy or misery,  
And tossed in terrible tangles of some wild and wind-  
swept sea.

This hot hard flame with which our bodies burn  
Will make some meadow blaze with daffodil,  
Ay ! and those argent breasts of thine will turn  
To water-lilies ; the brown fields men till  
Will be more fruitful for our love to-night,  
Nothing is lost in nature, all things live in Death's  
despite.

The boy's first kiss, the hyacinth's first bell,  
The man's last passion, and the last red spear  
That from the lily leaps, the asphodel  
Which will not let its blossoms blow for fear  
Of too much beauty, and the timid shame  
Of the young bride-groom at his lover's eyes, — these  
with the same

One sacrament are consecrate, the earth  
Not we alone hath passions hymeneal,  
The yellow buttercups that shake for mirth  
At daybreak know a pleasure not less real  
Than we do, when in some fresh-blossoming wood  
We draw the spring into our hearts, and feel that life is  
good.

So when men bury us beneath the yew  
Thy crimson-stainèd mouth a rose will be,  
And thy soft eyes lush bluebells dimmed with dew,  
And when the white narcissus wantonly  
Kisses the wind its playmate, some faint joy  
Will thrill our dust, and we will be again fond maid and  
boy.

And thus without life's conscious torturing pain  
In some sweet flower we will feel the sun,  
And from the linnet's throat will sing again,  
And as two gorgeous-mailèd snakes will run  
Over our graves, or as two tigers creep  
Through the hot jungle where the yellow-eyed huge lions  
sleep

And give them battle ! How my heart leaps up  
To think of that grand living after death  
In beast and bird and flower, when this cup,  
Being filled too full of spirit, bursts for breath,  
And with the pale leaves of some autumn day  
The soul earth's earliest conqueror becomes earth's last  
great prey.

O think of it ! We shall inform ourselves  
Into all sensuous life, the goat-foot Faun,  
The Centaur, or the merry bright-eyed Elves  
That leave their dancing rings to spite the dawn  
Upon the meadows, shall not be more near  
Than you and I to nature's mysteries, for we shall hear

The thrush's heart beat, and the daisies grow,  
And the wan snowdrop sighing for the sun  
On sunless days in winter, we shall know  
By whom the silver gossamer is spun,  
Who paints the diapered fritillaries,  
On what wide wings from shivering pine to pine the eagle  
flies.

Ay ! had we never loved at all, who knows

    If yonder daffodil had lured the bee

Into its gilded womb, or any rose

    Had hung with crimson lamps its little tree !

Methinks no leaf would ever bud in spring,

But for the lovers' lips that kiss, the poets' lips that sing.

Is the light vanished from our golden sun,

    Or is this dædal-fashioned earth less fair,

That we are nature's heritors, and one

    With every pulse of life that beats the air ?

Rather new suns across the sky shall pass,

New splendour come unto the flower, new glory to the  
    grass.

And we two lovers shall not sit afar,

    Critics of nature, but the joyous sea

Shall be our raiment, and the bearded star

    Shoot arrows at our pleasure ! We shall be

Part of the mighty universal whole,

And through all æons mix and mingle with the Kosmic  
    Soul !

We shall be notes in that great Symphony

Whose cadence circles through the rhythmic spheres,  
And all the live World's throbbing heart shall be

One with our heart, the stealthy creeping years  
Have lost their terrors now, we shall not die,  
The Universe itself shall be our Immortality !



## IMPRESSON.

## LE REVEILLON.

THE sky is laced with fitful red,  
The circling mists and shadows flee,  
The dawn is rising from the sea,  
Like a white lady from her bed.

And jagged brazen arrows fall  
Athwart the feathers of the night,  
And a long wave of yellow light  
Breaks silently on tower and hall,

And spreading wide across the wold  
Wakes into flight some fluttering bird,  
And all the chestnut tops are stirred,  
And all the branches streaked with gold.

## AT VERONA.

How steep the stairs within Kings' houses are  
 For exile-wearied feet as mine to tread,  
 And O how salt and bitter is the bread  
 Which falls from this Hound's table, — better far  
 That I had died in the red ways of war,  
 Or that the gate of Florence bare my head,  
 Than to live thus, by all things comraded  
 Which seek the essence of my soul to mar.

“Curse God and die : what better hope than this?  
 He hath forgotten thee in all the bliss  
 Of his gold city, and eternal day” —  
 Nay peace : behind my prison's blinded bars  
 I do possess what none can take away,  
 My love, and all the glory of the stars.



## APOLOGIA.

Is it thy will that I should wax and wane,  
    Barter my cloth of gold for hodden grey,  
And at thy pleasure weave that web of pain  
    Whose brightest threads are each a wasted day?

Is it thy will — Love that I love so well —  
    That my Soul's House should be a tortured spot  
Wherein, like evil paramours, must dwell  
    The quenchless flame, the worm that dieth not?

Nay, if it be thy will I shall endure,  
    And sell ambition at the common mart,  
And let dull failure be my vestiture,  
    And sorrow dig its grave within my heart.

Perchance it may be better so — at least  
I have not made my heart a heart of stone,  
Nor starved my boyhood of its goodly feast,  
Nor walked where Beauty is a thing unknown.

Many a man hath done so ; sought to fence  
In straitened bonds the soul that should be free,  
Trodden the dusty road of common sense,  
While all the forest sang of liberty,

Not marking how the spotted hawk in flight  
Passed on wide pinion through the lofty air,  
To where the steep untrodden mountain height  
Caught the last tresses of the Sun God's hair.

Or how the little flower he trod upon,  
The daisy, that white-feathered shield of gold,  
Followed with wistful eyes the wandering sun  
Content if once its leaves were aureoled.

But surely it is something to have been  
The best beloved for a little while,  
To have walked hand in hand with Love, and seen  
His purple wings flit once across thy smile.

Ay ! though the gorgèd asp of passion feed  
On my boy's heart, yet have I burst the bars,  
Stood face to face with Beauty, known indeed  
The Love which moves the Sun and all the stars !

## QUIA MULTUM AMAVI.

DEAR Heart I think the young impassioned priest  
When first he takes from out the hidden shrine  
His God imprisoned in the Eucharist,  
And eats the bread, and drinks the dreadful wine,

Feels not such awful wonder as I felt  
When first my smitten eyes beat full on thee,  
And all night long before thy feet I knelt  
Till thou wert wearied of Idolatry.

Ah ! had'st thou liked me less and loved me more,  
Through all those summer days of joy and rain,  
I had not now been sorrow's heritor,  
Or stood a lackey in the House of Pain.

Yet, though remorse, youth's white-faced seneschal  
Tread on my heels with all his retinue,  
I am most glad I loved thee — think of all  
The suns that go to make one speedwell blue !

## SILENTIUM AMORIS.

As oftentimes the too resplendent sun  
 Hurries the pallid and reluctant moon  
 Back to her sombre cave, ere she hath won  
 A single ballad from the nightingale,  
 So doth thy Beauty make my lips to fail,  
 And all my sweetest singing out of tune.

And as at dawn across the level mead  
 On wings impetuous some wind will come,  
 And with its too harsh kisses break the reed  
 Which was its only instrument of song,  
 So my too stormy passions work me wrong,  
 And for excess of Love my Love is dumb.

But surely unto Thee mine eyes did show  
 Why I am silent, and my lute unstrung ;  
 Else it were better we should part, and go,  
 Thou to some lips of sweeter melody,  
 And I to nurse the barren memory  
 Of un-kissed kisses, and songs never sung.

## HER VOICE.

THE wild bee reels from bough to bough  
 With his furry coat and his gauzy wing.

Now in a lily-cup, and now

Setting a jacinth bell a-swing,

In his wandering ;

Sit closer love : it was here I trow

I made that vow,

Swore that two lives should be like one

As long as the sea-gull loved the sea,

As long as the sunflower sought the sun, —

It shall be, I said, for eternity

'Twixt you and me !

Dear friend, those times are over and done,

Love's web is spun.

Look upward where the poplar trees  
Sway and sway in the summer air,  
Here in the valley never a breeze  
Scatters the thistledown, but there  
Great winds blow fair  
From the mighty murmuring mystical seas,  
And the wave-lashed leas.

Look upward where the white gull screams,  
What does it see that we do not see?  
Is that a star? or the lamp that gleams  
On some outward voyaging argosy, —  
Ah! can it be  
We have lived our lives in a land of dreams!  
How sad it seems.

Sweet, there is nothing left to say  
But this, that love is never lost,  
Keen winter stabs the breasts of May  
Whose crimson roses burst his frost,  
Ships tempest-tossed  
Will find a harbour in some bay,  
And so we may.



And there is nothing left to do  
But to kiss once again, and part,  
Nay, there is nothing we should rue,  
I have my beauty, — you your Art,  
Nay, do not start,  
One world was not enough for two  
Like me and you.

## MY VOICE.

WITHIN this restless, hurried, modern world  
We took our hearts' full pleasure — You and I,  
And now the white sails of our ship are furled,  
And spent the lading of our argosy.

Wherefore my cheeks before their time are wan,  
For very weeping is my gladness fled,  
Sorrow hath paled my lip's vermilion,  
And Ruin draws the curtains of my bed.

But all this crowded life has been to thee  
No more than lyre, or lute, or subtle spell  
Of viols, or the music of the sea  
That sleeps, a mimic echo, in the shell.

## TÆDIUM VITÆ.

To stab my youth with desperate knives, to wear  
This paltry age's gaudy livery,  
To let each base hand filch my treasury,  
To mesh my soul within a woman's hair,  
And be mere Fortune's lackeyed groom, — I swear  
I love it not ! these things are less to me  
Than the thin foam that frets upon the sea,  
Less than the thistle-down of summer air  
Which hath no seed : better to stand aloof  
Far from these slanderous fools who mock my life  
Knowing me not, better the lowliest roof  
Fit for the meanest hind to sojourn in,  
Than to go back to that hoarse cave of strife  
Where my white soul first kissed the mouth of sin.



HUMANIDAD.



It is full Winter now : the trees are bare,  
Save where the cattle huddle from the cold  
Beneath the pine, for it doth never wear  
The Autumn's gaudy livery whose gold  
Her jealous brother pilfers, but is true  
To the green doublet ; bitter is the wind, as though it  
blew

From Saturn's cave ; a few thin wisps of hay  
Lie on the sharp black hedges, where the wain  
Dragged the sweet pillage of a summer's day  
From the low meadows up the narrow lane ;  
Upon the half-thawed snow the bleating sheep  
Press close against the hurdles, and the shivering house-  
dogs creep

From the shut stable to the frozen stream  
And back again disconsolate, and miss  
The bawling shepherds and the noisy team ;  
And overhead in circling listlessness  
The cawing rooks whirl round the frosted stack,  
Or crowd the dripping boughs ; and in the fen the ice-  
pools crack

Where the gaunt bittern stalks among the reeds  
And flaps his wings, and stretches back his neck,  
And hoots to see the moon ; across the meads  
Limps the poor frightened hare, a little speck ;  
And a stray seamew with its fretful cry  
Flits like a sudden drift of snow against the dull grey sky.

Full winter : and the lusty goodman brings  
His load of faggots from the chilly byre,  
And stamps his feet upon the hearth, and flings  
The sappy billets on the waning fire,  
And laughs to see the sudden lightening scare  
His children at their play ; and yet, — the Spring is in the  
air,



Already the slim crocus stirs the snow,  
And soon yon blanchèd fields will bloom again  
With nodding cowslips for some lad to mow,  
For with the first warm kisses of the rain  
The winter's icy sorrow breaks to tears,  
And the brown thrushes mate, and with bright eyes the  
rabbit peers

From the dark warren where the fir-cones lie,  
And treads one snowdrop under foot, and runs  
Over the mossy knoll, and blackbirds fly  
Across our path at evening, and the suns  
Stay longer with us ; ah ! how good to see  
Grass-girdled Spring in all her joy of laughing greenery

Dance through the hedges till the early rose,  
(That sweet repentance of the thorny briar !)  
Burst from its sheathèd emerald and disclose  
The little quivering disk of golden fire  
Which the bees know so well, for with it come  
Pale boys-love, sops-in-wine, and daffadillies all in bloom.

Then up and down the field the sower goes,  
While close behind the laughing younker scares  
With shrilly whoop the black and thievish crows,  
And then the chestnut-tree its glory wears,  
And on the grass the creamy blossom falls  
In odorous excess, and faint half-whispered madrigals

Steal from the bluebells' nodding carillons  
Each breezy morn, and then white jessamine,  
That star of its own heaven, snapdragons  
With lolling crimson tongues, and eglantine  
In dusty velvets clad usurp the bed  
And woodland empery, and when the lingering rose hath  
shed

Red leaf by leaf its folded panoply,  
And pansies closed their purple-lidded eyes,  
Chrysanthemums from gilded argosy  
Unload their gaudy scentless merchandise,  
And violets getting overbold withdraw  
From their shy nooks, and scarlet berries dot the leafless  
haw.

O happy field ! and O thrice happy tree !

Soon will your queen in daisy-flowered smock  
And crown of flower-de-luce trip down the lea,  
Soon will the lazy shepherds drive their flock  
Back to the pasture by the pool, and soon  
Through the green leaves will float the hum of murmuring  
bees at noon.

Soon will the glade be bright with bellamour,  
The flower which wantons love, and those sweet nuns  
Vale-lilies in their snowy vestiture  
Will tell their beaded pearls, and carnations  
With mitred dusky leaves will scent the wind,  
And stragglng traveller's joy each hedge with yellow stars  
will bind.

Dear Bride of Nature and most bounteous Spring !  
That can'st give increase to the sweet-breath'd kine,  
And to the kid its little horns, and bring  
The soft and silky blossoms to the vine,  
Where is that old nepenthe which of yore  
Man got from poppy root and glossy-berried mandragore !

There was a time when any common bird  
    Could make me sing in unison, a time  
When all the strings of boyish life were stirred  
    To quick response or more melodious rhyme  
By every forest idyll ; — do I change ?  
Or rather doth some evil thing through thy fair pleasure  
    range ?

Nay, nay, thou art the same : 'tis I who seek  
    To vex with sighs thy simple solitude,  
And because fruitless tears bedew my cheek  
    Would have thee weep with me in brotherhood ;  
Fool ! shall each wronged and restless spirit dare  
To taint such wine with the salt poison of his own  
    despair !

Thou art the same : 'tis I whose wretched soul  
    Takes discontent to be its paramour,  
And gives its kingdom to the rude control  
    Of what should be its servitor, — for sure  
Wisdom is somewhere, though the stormy sea  
Contain it not, and the huge deep answer “ 'Tis not in  
    me.”

To burn with one clear flame, to stand erect  
In natural honour, not to bend the knee  
In profitless prostrations whose effect  
Is by itself condemned, what alchemy  
Can teach me this? what herb Medea brewed  
Will bring the unexultant peace of essence not subdued?

The minor chord which ends the harmony,  
And for its answering brother waits in vain,  
Sobbing for incompleated melody  
Dies a Swan's death ; but I the heir of pain  
A silent Memnon with blank lidless eyes  
Wait for the light and music of those suns which never  
rise.

The quenched-out torch, the lonely cypress-gloom,  
The little dust stored in the narrow urn,  
The gentle XAIPE of the Attic tomb, —  
Were not these better far than to return  
To my old fitful restless malady,  
Or spend my days within the voiceless cave of misery?

Nay ! for perchance that poppy-crownèd God  
Is like the watcher by a sick man's bed  
Who talks of sleep but gives it not ; his rod  
Hath lost its virtue, and, when all is said,  
Death is too rude, too obvious a key  
To solve one single secret in a life's philosophy.

And Love ! that noble madness, whose august  
And inextinguishable might can slay  
The soul with honied drugs, — alas ! I must  
From such sweet ruin play the runaway,  
Although too constant memory never can  
Forget the archèd splendour of those brows Olympian

Which for a little season made my youth  
So soft a swoon of exquisite indolence  
That all the chiding of more prudent Truth  
Seemed the thin voice of jealousy, — O Hence  
Thou huntress deadlier than Artemis !  
Go seek some other quarry ! for of thy too perilous bliss

My lips have drunk enough, — no more, no more,—

Though Love himself should turn his gilded prow  
Back to the troubled waters of this shore

Where I am wrecked and stranded, even now  
The chariot wheels of passion sweep too near,  
Hence ! Hence ! I pass unto a life more barren, more  
austere.

More barren — ay, those arms will never lean

Down through the trellised vines and draw my soul  
In sweet reluctance through the tangled green ;

Some other head must wear that aureole,  
For I am Hers who loves not any man  
Whose white and stainless bosom bears the sign Gorgo-  
nian.

Let Venus go and chuck her dainty page,

And kiss his mouth, and toss his curly hair,  
With net and spear and hunting equipage

Let young Adonis to his tryst repair,  
But me her fond and subtle-fashioned spell  
Delights no more, though I could win her dearest citadel.

Ay, though I were that laughing shepherd boy  
Who from Mount Ida saw the little cloud  
Pass over Tenedos and lofty Troy  
And knew the coming of the Queen, and bowed  
In wonder at her feet, not for the sake  
Of a new Helen would I bid her hand the apple take.

Then rise supreme Athena argent-limbed !  
And, if my lips be musicless, inspire  
At least my life : was not thy glory hymned  
By One who gave to thee his sword and lyre  
Like Æschylus at well-fought Marathon,  
And died to show that Milton's England still could bear  
a son !

And yet I cannot tread the Portico  
And live without desire, fear, and pain,  
Or nurture that wise calm which long ago  
The grave Athenian master taught to men,  
Self-poised, self-centred, and self-comforted,  
To watch the world's vain phantasies go by with unbowed  
head.



Alas ! that serene brow, those eloquent lips,  
Those eyes that mirrored all eternity,  
Rest in their own Colonos, an eclipse  
Hath come on Wisdom, and Mnemosyne  
Is childless ; in the night which she had made  
For lofty secure flight Athena's owl itself hath strayed.

Nor much with Science do I care to climb,  
Although by strange and subtle witchery  
She draw the moon from heaven : the Muse of Time  
Unrolls her gorgeous-coloured tapestry  
To no less eager eyes ; often indeed  
In the great epic of Polymnia's scroll I love to read

How Asia sent her myriad hosts to war  
Against a little town, and panoplied  
In gilded mail with jewelled scimeter,  
White-shielded, purple-crested, rode the Mede  
Between the waving poplars and the sea  
Which men call Artemisium, till he saw Thermopylæ

Its steep ravine spanned by a narrow wall,  
And on the nearer side a little brood  
Of careless lions holding festival !

And stood amazed at such hardihood,  
And pitched his tent upon the reedy shore,  
And stayed two days to wonder, and then crept at mid-  
night o'er

Some unfrequented height, and coming down

The autumn forests treacherously slew  
What Sparta held most dear and was the crown

Of far Eurotas, and passed on, nor knew  
How God had staked an evil net for him  
In the small bay of Salamis, — and yet, the page grows  
dim,

Its cadenced Greek delights me not, I feel

With such a goodly time too out of tune  
To love it much : for like the Dial's wheel

That from its blinded darkness strikes the noon  
Yet never sees the sun, so do my eyes  
Restlessly follow that which from my cheated vision  
flies.

O for one grand unselfish simple life  
 To teach us what is Wisdom ! speak ye hills  
 Of lone Helvellyn, for this note of strife  
 Shunned your untroubled crags and crystal rills,  
 Where is that Spirit which living blamelessly  
 Yet dared to kiss the smitten mouth of his own century !

Speak ye Rydalian laurels ! where is He  
 Whose gentle head ye sheltered, that pure soul  
 Whose gracious days of uncrowned majesty  
 Through lowliest conduct touched the lofty goal  
 Where Love and Duty mingle ! Him at least  
 The most high Laws were glad of, he had sat at Wisdom's  
 feast,

But we are Learning's changelings, know by rote  
 The clarion watchword of each Grecian school  
 And follow none, the flawless sword which smote  
 The pagan Hydra is an effete tool  
 Which we ourselves have blunted, what man now  
 Shall scale the august ancient heights and to old Rever-  
 ence bow ?

One such indeed I saw, but, Ichabod !

Gone is that last dear son of Italy,  
Who being man died for the sake of God,  
And whose unrisen bones sleep peacefully.  
O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower,  
Thou marble lily of the lily town ! let not the lower

Of the rude tempest vex his slumber, or  
The Arno with its tawny troubled gold  
O'erleap its marge, no mightier conqueror  
Clomb the high Capitol in the days of old  
When Rome was indeed Rome, for Liberty  
Walked like a Bride beside him, at which sight pale  
Mystery

Fled shrieking to her farthest sombrest cell  
With an old man who grabbed rusty keys,  
Fled shuddering for that immemorial knell  
With which oblivion buries dynasties  
Swept like a wounded eagle on the blast,  
As to the holy heart of Rome the great triumvir passed.

He knew the holiest heart and heights of Rome,  
He drove the base wolf from the lion's lair,  
And now lies dead by that empyreal dome  
Which overtops Valdarno hung in air  
By Brunelleschi — O Melpomene  
Breathe through thy melancholy pipe thy sweetest thren-  
ody !

Breathe through the tragic stops such melodies  
That Joy's self may grow jealous, and the Nine  
Forget a-while their discreet emperies,  
Mourning for him who on Rome's lordliest shrine  
Lit for men's lives the light of Marathon,  
And bare to sun-forgotten fields the fire of the sun !

O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower,  
Let some young Florentine each eventide  
Bring coronals of that enchanted flower  
Which the dim woods of Vallombrosa hide,  
And deck the marble tomb wherein he lies  
Whose soul is as some mighty orb unseen of mortal  
eyes.

Some mighty orb whose cycled wanderings,  
 Being tempest-driven to the farthest rim  
 Where Chaos meets Creation and the wings  
 Of the eternal chanting Cherubim  
 Are pavilioned on Nothing, passed away  
 Into a moonless void, — and yet, though he is dust and  
 clay,

He is not dead, the immemorial Fates  
 Forbid it, and the closing shears refrain,  
 Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates !  
 Ye argent clarions sound a loftier strain !  
 For the vile thing he hated lurks within  
 Its sombre house, alone with God and memories of  
 sin.

Still what avails it that she sought her cave  
 That murderous mother of red harlotries?  
 At Munich on the marble architrave  
 The Grecian boys die smiling, but the seas  
 Which wash Ægina fret in loneliness  
 Not mirroring their beauty, so our lives grow colour-  
 less

For lack of our ideals, if one star  
Flame torch-like in the heavens the unjust  
Swift daylight kills it, and no trump of war  
Can wake to passionate voice the silent dust  
Which was Mazzini once ! rich Niobe  
For all her stony sorrows hath her sons, but Italy !

What Easter Day shall make her children rise,  
Who were not Gods yet suffered? what sure feet  
Shall find their graveclothes folded? what clear eyes  
Shall see them bodily? O it were meet  
To roll the stone from off the sepulchre  
And kiss the bleeding roses of their wounds, in love of  
Her

Our Italy ! our mother visible !  
Most blessed among nations and most sad,  
For whose dear sake the young Calabrian fell  
That day at Aspromonte and was glad  
That in an age when God was bought and sold  
One man could die for Liberty ! but we, burnt out and  
cold,

See Honour smitten on the cheek and gyves  
 Bind the sweet-feet of Mercy : Poverty  
 Creeps through our sunless lanes and with sharp knives  
 Cuts the warm throats of children stealthily,  
 And no word said : — O we are wretched men  
 Unworthy of our great inheritance ! where is the pen

Of austere Milton? where the mighty sword  
 Which slew its master righteously? the years  
 Have lost their ancient leader, and no word  
 Breaks from the voiceless tripod on our ears :  
 While as a ruined mother in some spasm  
 Bears a base child and loathes it, so our best enthu-  
 siasm

Genders unlawful children, Anarchy  
 Freedom's own Judas, the vile prodigal  
 Licence who steals the gold of Liberty  
 And yet has nothing, Ignorance the real  
 One Fratricide since Cain, Envy the asp  
 That stings itself to anguish, Avarice whose palsied  
 grasp



Is in its extent stiffened, monied Greed  
For whose dull appetite men waste away  
Amid the whirr of wheels and are the seed  
Of things which slay their sower, these each day  
Sees rife in England, and the gentle feet  
Of Beauty tread no more the stones of each unlovely  
street.

What even Cromwell spared is desecrated  
By weed and worm, left to the stormy play  
Of wind and beating snow, or renovated  
By more destructful hands : Time's worst decay  
Will wreathe its ruins with some loveliness,  
But these new Vandals can but make a rainproof barren-  
ness.

Where is that Art which bade the Angels sing  
Through Lincoln's lofty choir, till the air  
Seems from such marble harmonies to ring  
With sweeter song than common lips can dare  
To draw from actual reed? ah ! where is now  
The cunning hand which made the flowering hawthorn  
branches bow

For Southwell's arch, and carved the House of One  
 Who loved the lilies of the field with all  
 Our dearest English flowers? the same sun  
 Rises for us : the seasons natural  
 Weave the same tapestry of green and grey :  
 The unchanged hills are with us : but that Spirit hath  
 passed away.

And yet perchance it may be better so,  
 For Tyranny is an incestuous Queen,  
 Murder her brother is her bedfellow,  
 And the Plague chambers with her : in obscene  
 And bloody paths her treacherous feet are set ;  
 Better the empty desert and a soul inviolate !

For gentle brotherhood, the harmony  
 Of living in the healthful air, the swift  
 Clean beauty of strong limbs when men are free  
 And women chaste, these are the things which lift  
 Our souls up more than even Agnolo's  
 Gaunt blinded Sibyl poring o'er the scroll of human  
 woes,

Or Titian's little maiden on the stair

White as her own sweet lily and as tall,

Or Mona Lisa smiling through her hair, —

Ah ! somehow life is bigger after all

Than any painted angel could we see

The God that is within us ! The old Greek serenity

Which curbs the passion of that level line

Of marble youths, who with untroubled eyes

And chastened limbs ride round Athena's shrine

And mirror her divine economies,

And balanced symmetry of what in man

Would else wage ceaseless warfare, — this at least within  
the span

Between our mother's kisses and the grave

Might so inform our lives, that we could win

Such mighty empires that from her cave

Temptation would grow hoarse, and pallid Sin

Would walk ashamed of his adulteries,

And Passion creep from out the House of Lust with  
startled eyes.

To make the Body and the Spirit one  
    With all right things, till no thing live in vain  
From morn to noon, but in sweet unison  
    With every pulse of flesh and throb of brain  
The Soul in flawless essence high enthroned,  
Against all outer vain attack invincibly bastioned,

Mark with serene impartiality  
    The strife of things, and yet be comforted,  
Knowing that by the chain causality  
    All separate existences are wed  
Into one supreme whole, whose utterance  
Is joy, or holier praise ! ah ! surely this were governance

Of Life in most august omnipresence,  
    Through which the rational intellect would find  
In passion its expression, and mere sense,  
    Ignoble else, lend fire to the mind,  
And being joined with it in harmony  
More mystical than that which binds the stars planetary,

Strike from their several tones one octave chord  
Whose cadence being measureless would fly  
Through all the circling spheres, then to its Lord  
Return refreshed with its new empery  
And more exultant power, — this indeed  
Could we but reach it were to find the last, the perfect  
creed.

Ah ! it was easy when the world was young  
To keep one's life free and inviolate,  
From our sad lips another song is rung,  
By our own hands our heads are desecrate,  
Wanderers in drear exile, and dispossessed  
Of what should be our own, we can but feed on wild  
unrest.

Somehow the grace, the bloom of things has flown,  
And of all men we are most wretched who  
Must live each other's lives and not our own  
For very pity's sake and then undo  
All that we live for — it was otherwise  
When soul and body seemed to blend in mystic sym-  
phonies.

But we have left those gentle haunts to pass  
With weary feet to the new Calvary,  
Where we behold, as one who in a glass  
Sees his own face, self-slain Humanity,  
And in the dumb reproach of that sad gaze  
Learn what an awful phantom the red hand of man can  
raise.

O smitten mouth ! O forehead crowned with thorn !  
· O chalice of all common miseries !  
Thou for our sakes that loved thee not hast borne  
An agony of endless centuries,  
And we were vain and ignorant nor knew  
That when we stabbed thy heart it was our own real  
hearts we slew.

Being ourselves the sowers and the seeds,  
The night that covers and the lights that fade,  
The spear that pierces and the side that bleeds,  
The lips betraying and the life betrayed ;  
The deep hath calm : the moon hath rest : but we  
Lords of the natural world are yet our own dread  
enemy.

Is this the end of all that primal force  
Which, in its changes being still the same,  
From eyeless Chaos cleft its upward course,  
Through ravenous seas and whirling rocks and flame,  
Till the suns met in heaven and began  
Their cycles, and the morning stars sang, and the Word  
was Man !

Nay, nay, we are but crucified, and though  
The bloody sweat falls from our brows like rain,  
Loosen the nails — we shall come down I know,  
Staunch the red wounds — we shall be whole again,  
No need have we of hyssop-laden rod,  
That which is purely human, that is Godlike, that is  
God.





## ΓΑΥΚΥΗΗΚΡΟΣ · ΕΡΩΣ ·

SWEET I blame you not for mine the fault was, had I not  
 been made of common clay

I had climbed the higher heights unclimbed yet, seen the  
 fuller air, the larger day.

From the wildness of my wasted passion I had struck a  
 better, clearer song,

Lit some lighter light of freer freedom, battled with some  
 Hydra-headed wrong.

Had my lips been smitten into music by the kisses that  
 but made them bleed,

You had walked with Bice and the angels on that verdant  
 and enamelled mead.

I had trod the road which Dante treading saw the suns of  
 seven circles shine,

Ay! perchance had seen the heavens opening, as they  
 opened to the Florentine.

And the mighty nations would have crowned me, who am  
crownless now and without name,  
And some orient dawn had found me kneeling on the  
threshold of the House of Fame.

I had sat within that marble circle where the oldest bard  
is as the young,  
And the pipe is ever dropping honey, and the lyre's  
strings are ever strung.

Keats had lifted up his hymenæal curls from out the  
poppy-seeded wine,  
With ambrosial mouth had kissed my forehead, clasped  
the hand of noble love in mine.

And at springtide, when the apple-blossoms brush the  
burnished bosom of the dove,  
Two young lovers lying in an orchard would have read  
the story of our love.

Would have read the legend of my passion, known the  
bitter secret of my heart,  
Kissed as we have kissed, but never parted as we two are  
fated now to part.

For the crimson flower of our life is eaten by the canker-  
worm of truth,  
And no hand can gather up the fallen withered petals of  
the rose of youth.

Yet I am not sorry that I loved you — ah ! what else had  
I a boy to do, —  
For the hungry teeth of time devour, and the silent-footed  
years pursue.

Rudderless, we drift athwart a tempest, and when once  
the storm of youth is past,  
Without lyre, without lute or chorus, Death a silent pilot  
comes at last.

And within the grave there is no pleasure, for the blind-  
worm battens on the root,  
And Desire shudders into ashes, and the tree of Passion  
bears no fruit.

Ah ! what else had I to do but love you, God's own  
mother was less dear to me,  
And less dear the Cytheræan rising like an argent lily  
from the sea.

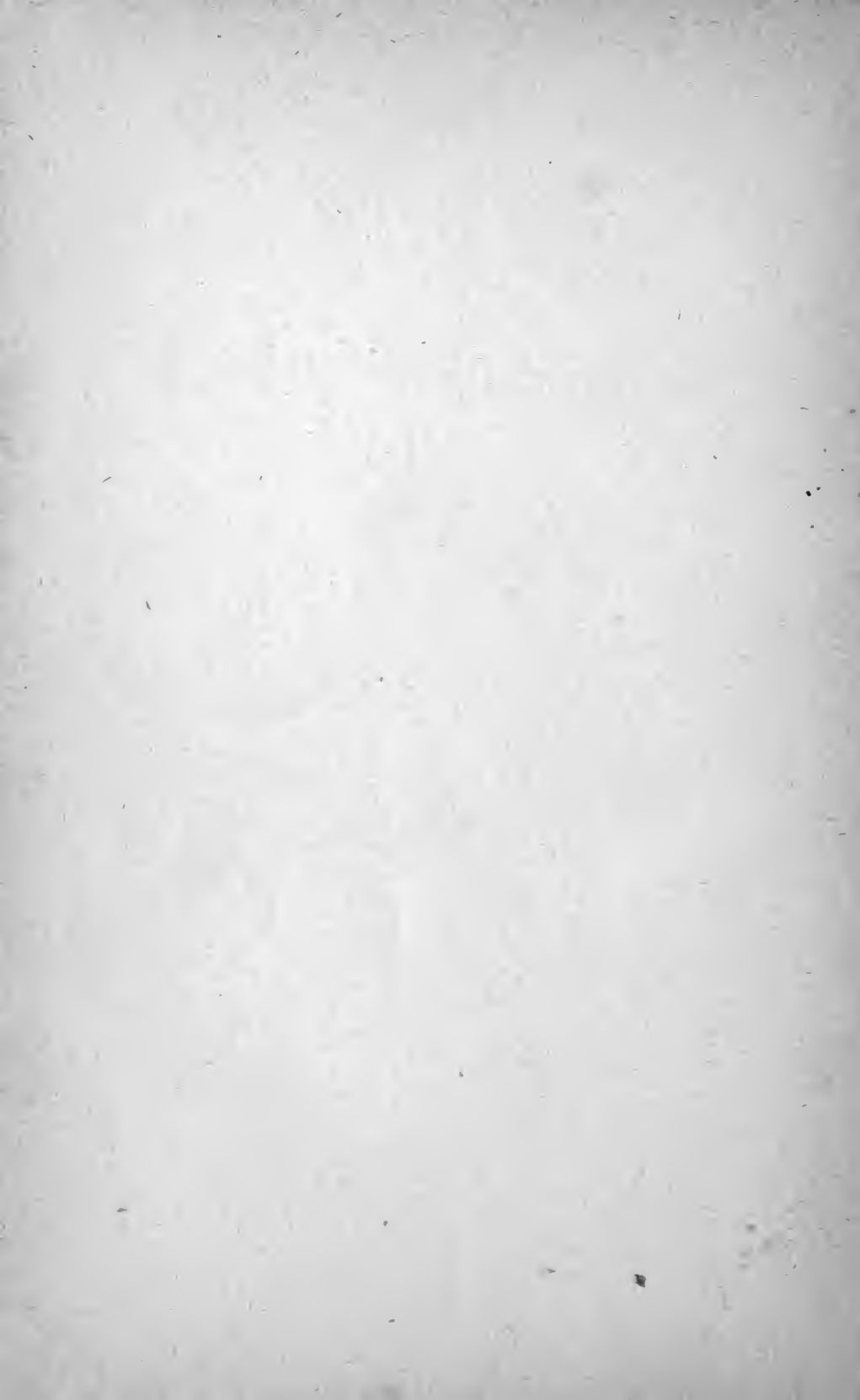
I have made my choice, have lived my poems, and,  
    though youth is gone in wasted days,  
I have found the lover's crown of myrtle better than the  
    poet's crown of bays.

THE END.



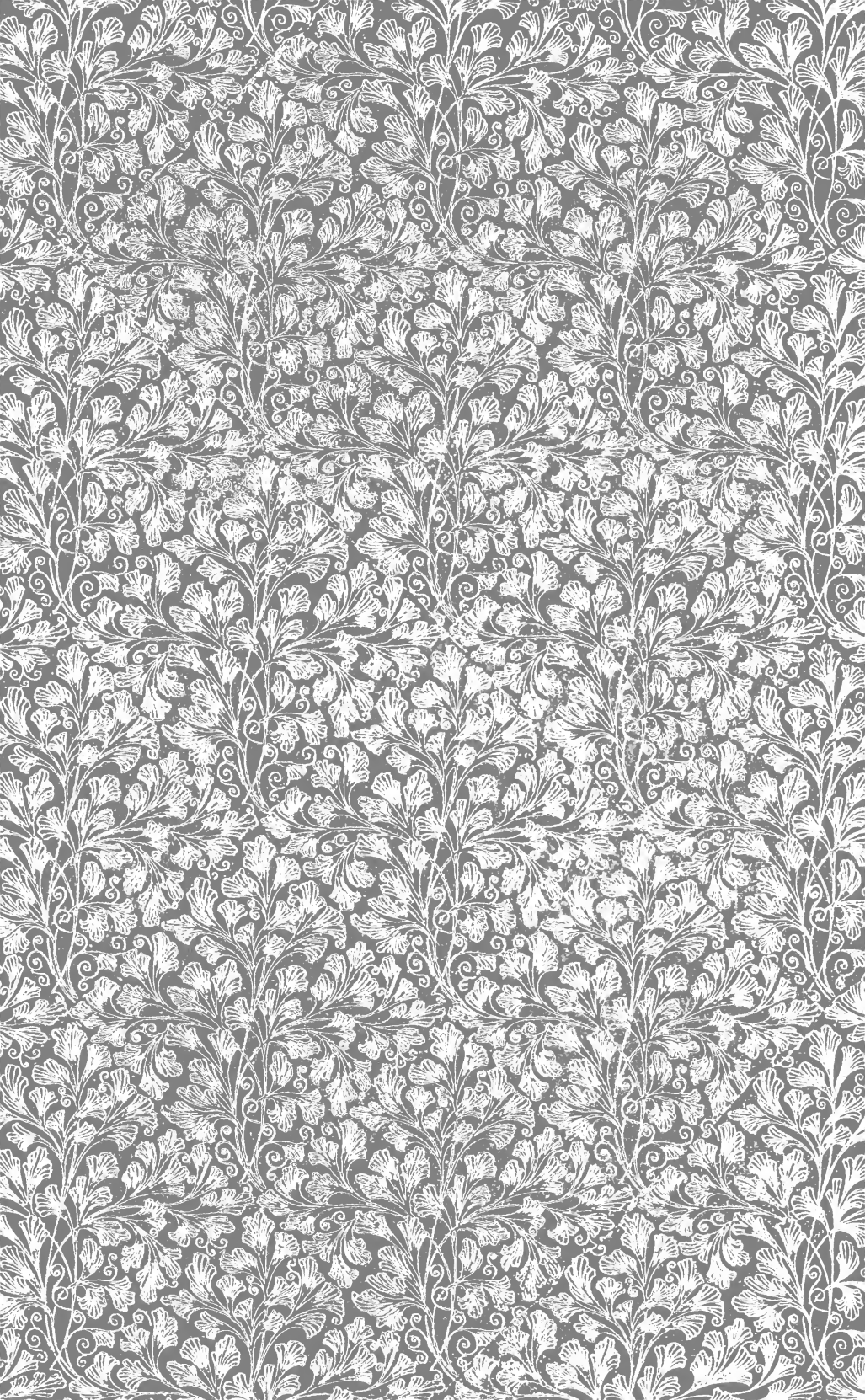


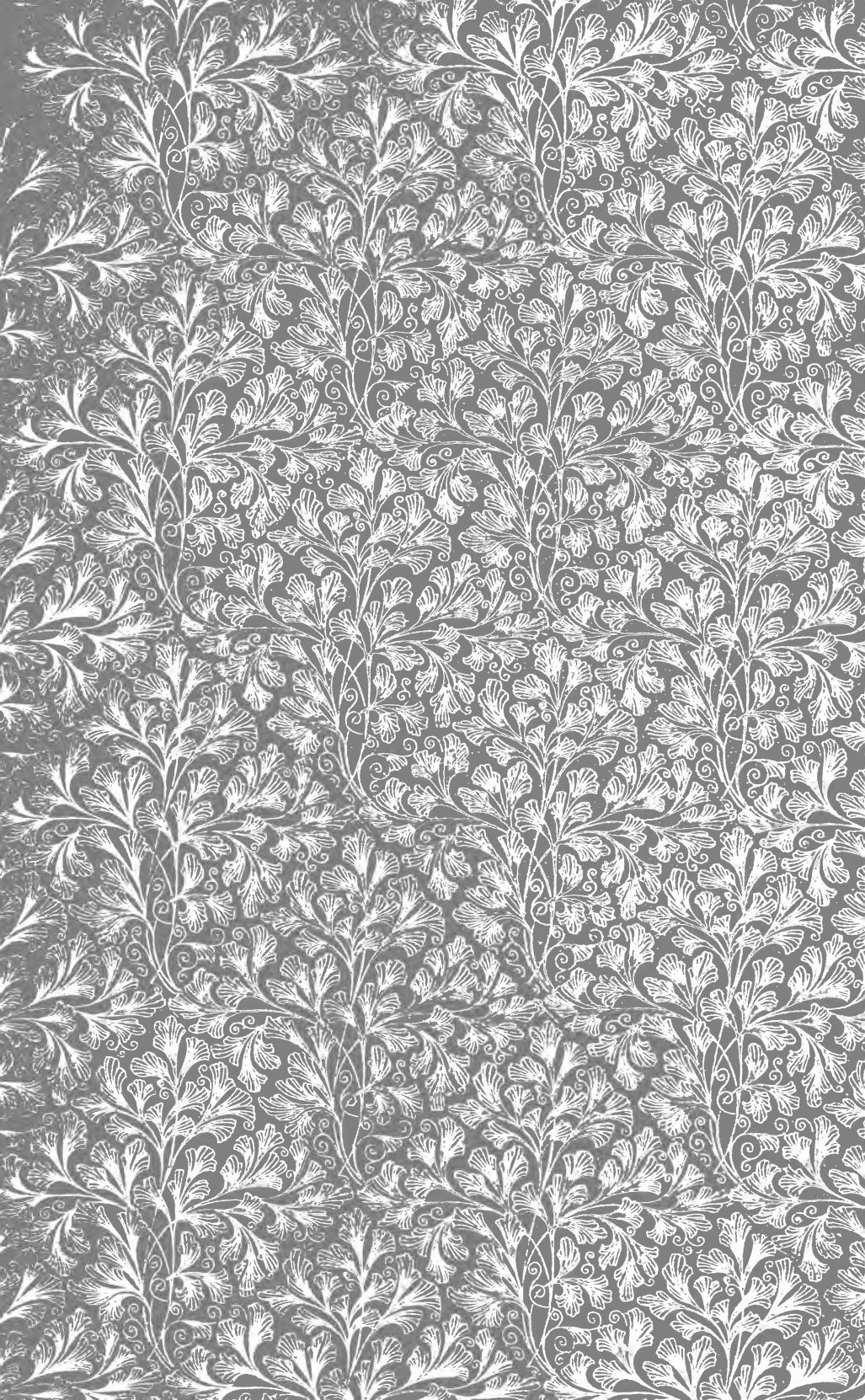




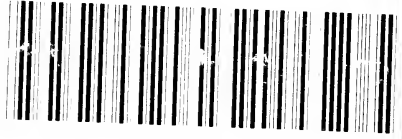








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